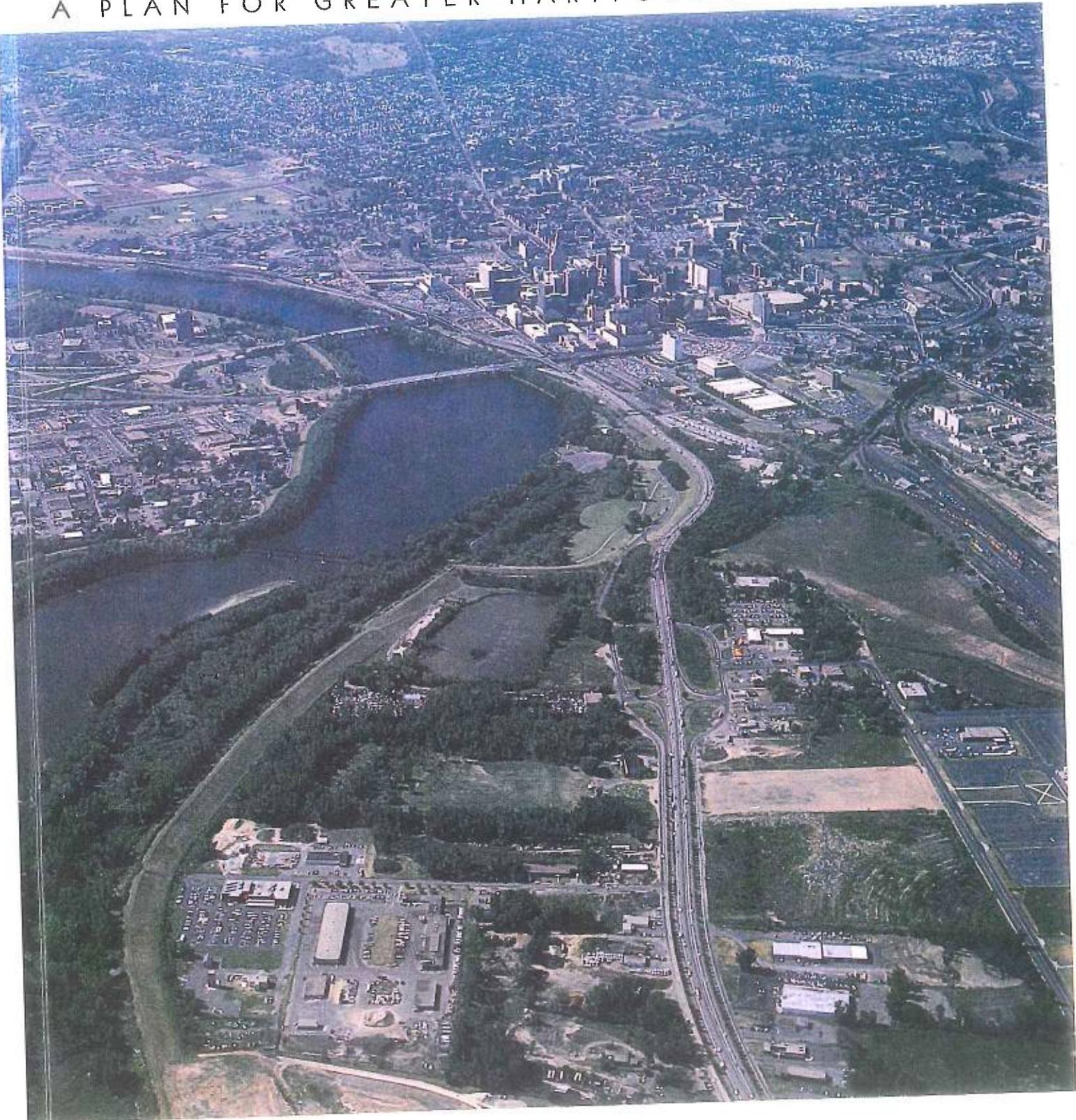


A PLAN FOR GREATER HARTFORD'S RIVERFRONT ■



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Riverfront Recapture, Inc. wishes to acknowledge the Town Councils of Wethersfield and Windsor for their courteous consideration of the riverfront concept and their thoughtful comments in developing the plan. The Board also extends its appreciation to the many state, regional and local agencies who participated in the preparation of this plan, especially the State Departments of Environmental Protection, Economic Development and Transportation, and the City of Hartford Redevelopment Agency, Development Commission and Planning Department.

A very special thanks to the Hartford schools and all the students who entered the "I Love My River" essay contest. The winners are published throughout the RECAPTURE PLAN.

RIVERFRONT PLAN

■ R I V E R F R O N T R E C A P T U R E , I N C . ■

December 1982

Introduction

RIVERFRONT RECAPTURE, INC. HAS PREPARED THIS **RECAPTURE PLAN** for presentation to the people who live and work in the Greater Hartford area. Its publication brings to a close RRI's initial planning year. Midway through that year, RRI explored the potential for riverfront revitalization in a publication called the **RIVERFRONT GUIDE**. To the question, "Why Riverfront Recapture?" the **GUIDE** gave some straightforward answers. "The riverfront," it said, "is a regional resource too valuable to ignore":

- It offers special and unique opportunities for recreation.
- It contains development sites for new residential and employment growth.
- It offers great natural beauty within minutes of city streets.
- It can be shared by all the region's citizens.

Since the **GUIDE** appeared, RRI has discussed the ideas in it with more than 60 civic, neighborhood, and business groups. Each was asked for reactions to the basic premise that the riverfront is worth recapturing and the response was overwhelmingly favorable.

Concerns were expressed about priorities. The region's neighborhoods have pressing needs, particularly jobs and housing, and as the reader will see, this **RECAPTURE PLAN** attempts to address them. In fact, without riverfront revitalization, it seems doubtful that the full potential of adjacent land will be realized.

In addition, the plan envisions construction and ongoing maintenance of the Riverwalk system, providing a continuing source of jobs for local residents, from the initial clearing of the area to planting trees and building new facilities. These jobs could be entry-level training positions for currently unemployed workers or young people.

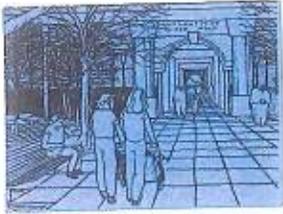
The plan also proposes other benefits:

- New recreation facilities accessible to all area residents: pathways for strolling and biking, areas for sports and picnics, and docks for fishing and boating.
- New educational opportunities: places for school children from throughout the area to experience the excitement of being on a major river and to study the environment.
- New entertainment spaces: places to have fun, to hold events and festivals, to attend concerts, to take the kids on a paddleboat ride, to have a barbecue, or to sit on the bank and watch the river flow.

Work toward realizing these benefits need not wait. It can begin immediately. The plan, in fact, foresees the riverfront being usable for major events during Hartford's celebration of its 350th Anniversary in 1986.

To achieve the plan's short- and long-term goals, however, vision and commitment will be needed. These will emerge only if the people of the Greater Hartford area work together to take full advantage of the riverfront's potential. It should be clear, moreover, that the plan as presented is not cast in concrete. Changes and improvements will have to be made over the years required to implement the plan fully. In short, the plan's success or failure will depend on your help and support. RRI hopes that you will become involved and urges you once again to come join the recapture effort.

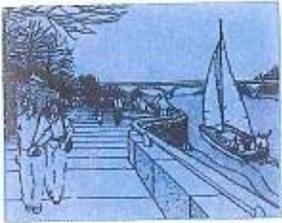
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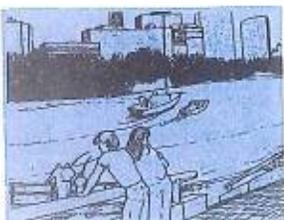
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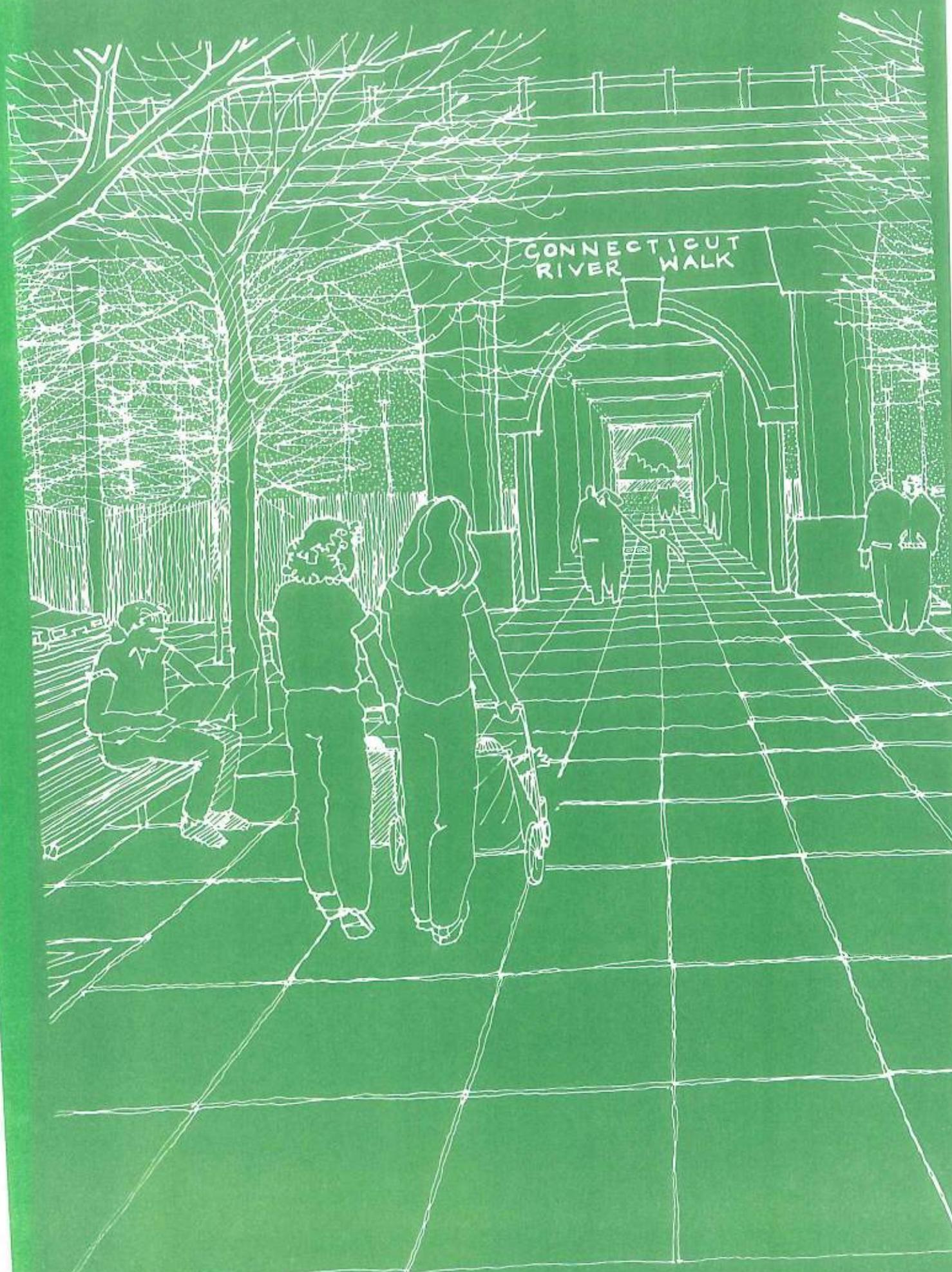


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CONNECTICUT
RIVER WALK



RIVERFRONT GOALS:

RECREATION • JOBS • HOUSING.

RECAPTURING THE CONNECTICUT RIVERFRONT IN THE GREATER Hartford area can:

- Improve the quality of life in the region by providing attractive and easily accessible places to play and relax;
- Increase the area's economic base by providing sites for commercial and industrial development;
- Contribute to the improvement of nearby neighborhoods, encouraging investment in new and renovated housing.

These three potential benefits—recreation, jobs, and housing—are the main goals of Riverfront Recapture. They can be mutually reinforcing. By improving the riverfront's recreational appeal, adjacent land will become more attractive for development. New development, in turn, will add new jobs and housing, which by fostering economic growth could help pay for further investment in riverfront amenities.

Although this Recapture Plan outlines a series of steps that can be taken immediately, it provides a vision of the riverfront's long-term potential.

In the following pages, you will read about:

- The Recapture Plan: a proposal for a linear park, linking communities and neighborhoods and evolving from a number of carefully defined projects in Hartford and East Hartford;
- Riverfront Activity: a variety of events and programs to attract residents and visitors to the riverfront throughout the year;
- Phasing: an outline of the steps to be taken during the next four years;
- Implementation: an exploration of options for the funding and organizing necessary to carry out the plan;
- Benefits to the region: an analysis of the positive impacts to be reaped from recapturing the riverfront.

Evolution of the Plan

RIVERFRONT RECAPTURE, INC. (RRI) was formed in 1981 in response to a request by the Hartford City Council for a private non-profit sponsor to plan the revitalization of the region's waterfront.

The desire to develop a plan for the riverfront emerged from a growing concern by public officials and private citizens that continued uncoordinated development near the river's edge could destroy opportunities for riverfront access and revitalization. As a first step in articulating these concerns, in May of 1980 several organizations sponsored a seminar on riverfront revitalization.

In August 1980, the Hartford City Planning Department published "Basic Criteria for Guiding Riverfront Revitalization," which, in addition to providing a valuable set of standards for future development, outlined a study area for this Recapture Plan. That area was divided into two sections:

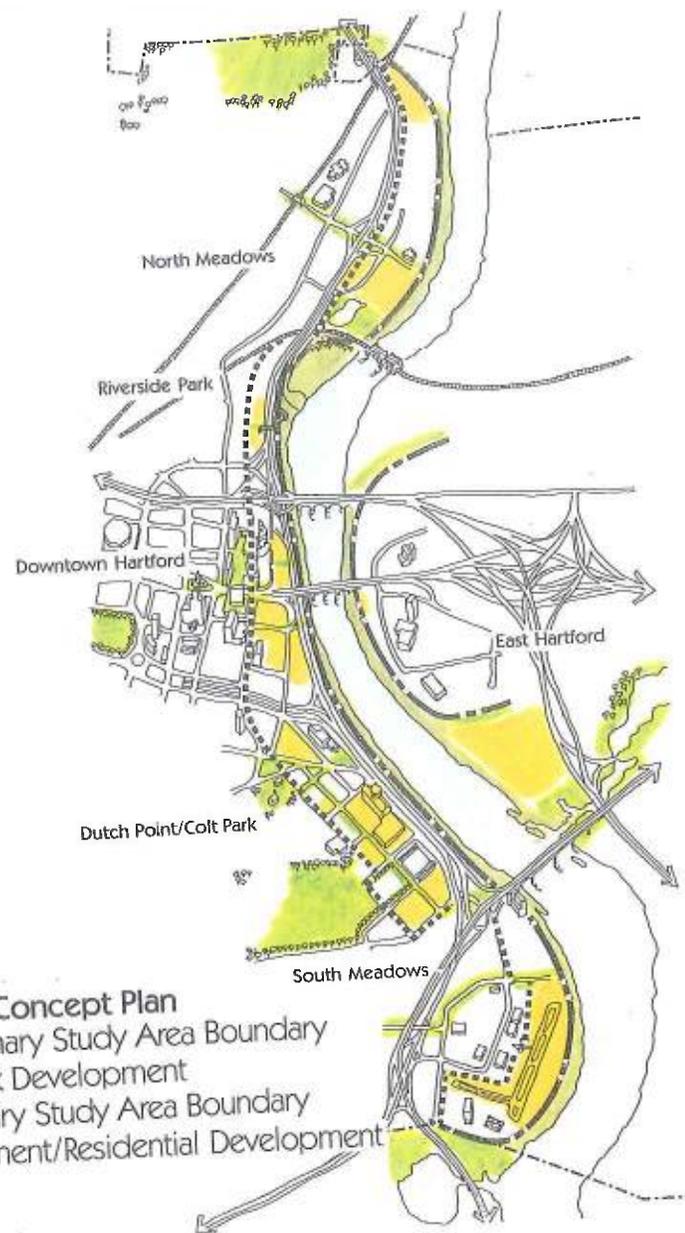
- **Primary Area:** the land between the dike and the river. Seasonal flooding prevents its development for year-round use.
- **Secondary Area:** the land on the protected side of the dike. This area includes land east of I-91 in the North and South Meadows, east of Market Street near Riverside Park, east of Columbus Boulevard downtown, and east of Van Block Avenue in the Colt Park area. In 1981, at the request of East Hartford, the planning area boundaries were expanded to include the area on the east bank of the river. This Recapture Plan suggests that future efforts also include riverfront land in Windsor and Wethersfield in order to establish a truly regional approach to the riverfront.

In the spring of 1981, Riverfront Recapture, Inc. was formally constituted. The following fall, a consultant team, the joint venture of Quennell Rothschild Associates/Buckhurst Fish Hutton Katz was selected to direct RRI's initial planning work.

The RIVERFRONT GUIDE,* published in July 1982, presented the results of the initial feasibility analysis carried out by the consultant team. Its major conclusions were that although many constraints exist (major access barriers, poor neighborhood connections, and flood-prone land on the river side of the dike), riverfront recapture was in fact

Recapture Concept Plan

- Dike: Primary Study Area Boundary
- River Park Development
- - - Secondary Study Area Boundary
- Employment/Residential Development



possible. Highways and dikes could be bridged, adjacent neighborhoods could be linked to a major recreational attraction, and adjacent sites on the city side of the dike could be developed.

There is historic precedent for such actions. Hartford grew with a proud heritage of public/private cooperation for civic development. Examples include its dike system, its park system, and many cultural and beautification projects.

There were two major design concepts for recapture proposed in the GUIDE. The first was the recreational development of the primary area on the river side of the dike. A continuous regional park, extending from Windsor to Wethersfield in Hartford and from the Bulkeley Bridge to the Hockanum River in East Hartford, can link riverfront activity sites along the river and to adjacent neighborhoods.

*A 52-page document available from Riverfront Recapture, Inc., 10 Prospect Street, Hartford, CT, and also at public libraries in the Greater Hartford area.

HARTFORD BRIDGE, HARTFORD, CONN



The second major concept was the development of many vacant or underutilized parcels on the city side of the dike. These parcels represent a major resource not only to the private owners and municipalities involved, but also for the riverfront; their proper development will help ensure better access to the river.

At the same time, the GUIDE examined successful recapture efforts in other cities. Many inspiring examples of overcoming access and flooding constraints were described; they all required time, cooperation, money and patience. Most also required extensive federal funding, not now available in this era of governmental restraint.

The challenge was clear: What was needed was a plan bold enough to capture the imagination and create the "critical mass" necessary for economic success, yet modest enough to be realized, given available resources and competing needs and priorities.

Using the GUIDE, an extensive public communications effort was undertaken in July, August, and September of 1982. This process entailed a discussions with more than 60 civic, neighborhood, and business groups, as well as a workshop for key public and private figures, and a public information

meeting attended by more than 200 interested people.

This process reinforced one of the principal ideas presented in the GUIDE: the need for recapture plans to stress jobs and housing—important neighborhood needs—as well as recreation and other related amenities. This theme is emphasized throughout the proposals presented in this volume.

The plan identifies short-term, step-by-step objectives for physical design, administration, and activity programming. This initial effort aims both to minimize public expenditure and to create the "critical mass" of development needed to attract a large number of visitors to the river. Implementation of the initial four-year plan would make it possible to celebrate Hartford's 350th Anniversary on the city's waterfront.

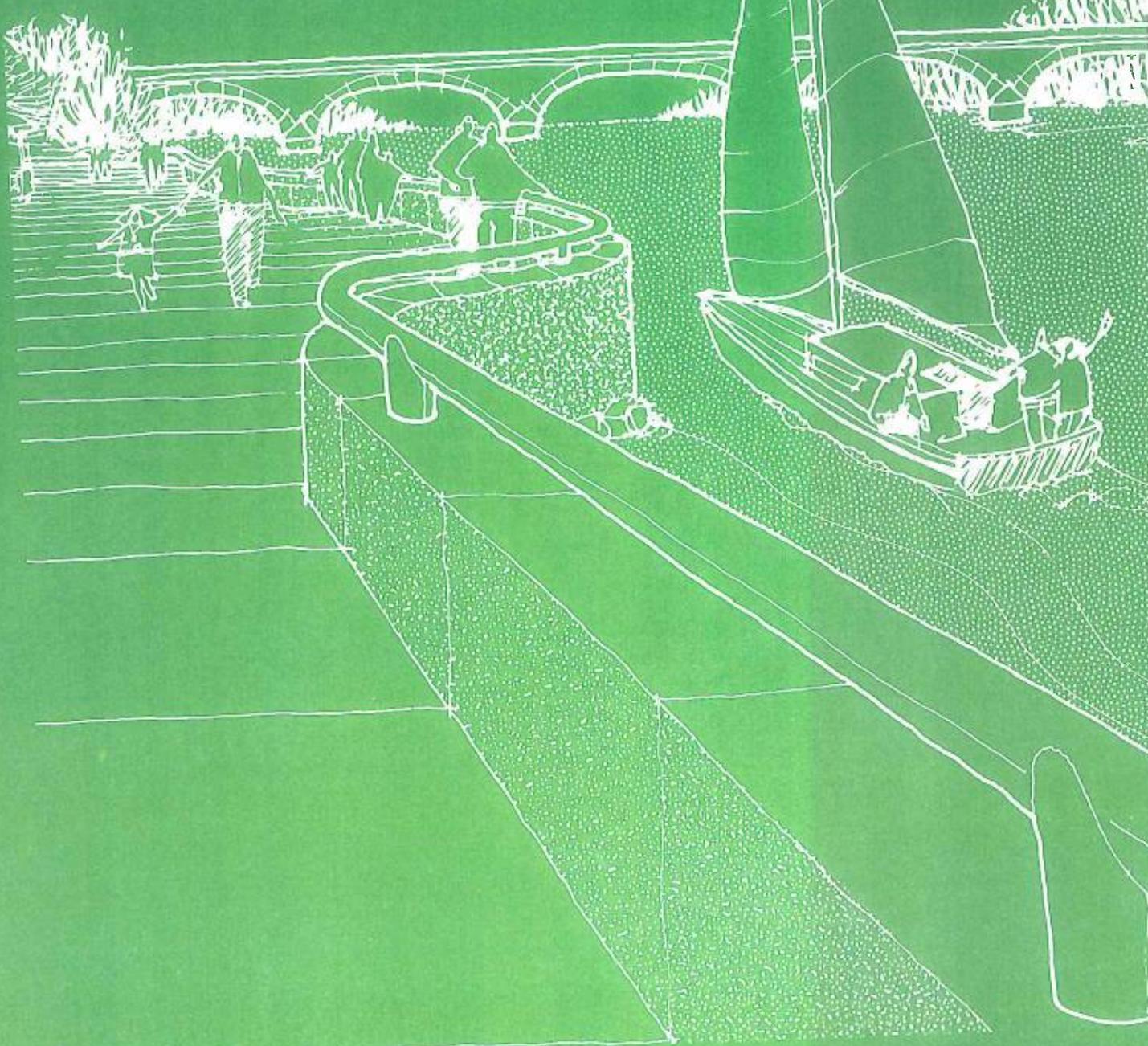
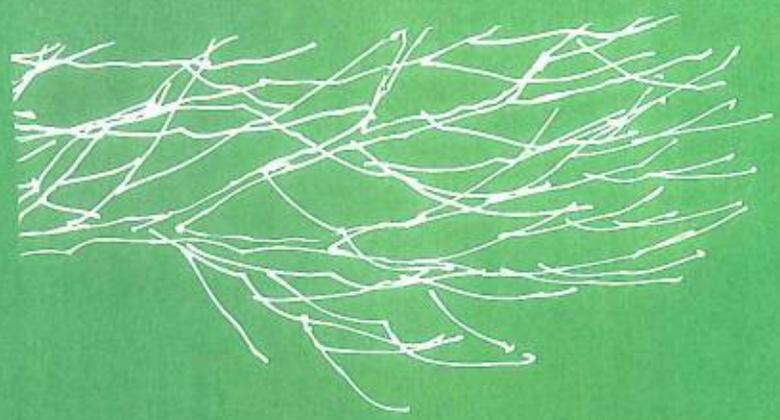
Even as short-term development efforts are taking place, however, planning and organization can begin for long-term development both on the riverfront itself and on adjacent sites in the secondary area. Over the next 20 years, according to the plan, the region not only will gain an actively used park, but also substantially increased jobs and housing opportunities.

GATEWAY TO A BUSY DOWNTOWN

Arthur Burg, West Hartford

I can still see how State Street looked when you could see the steamboat wharf just beyond the railroad bridge. More than once, I happened to be downtown when I could see the big, white steamboat tied up at the wharf, and freight and people being loaded for a trip to New York.

As a high school lad, I used to ride my bike all around that area. I can well picture State Street, Olds & Whipple's food store, Ensor's hardware store and the many other businesses that are gone...



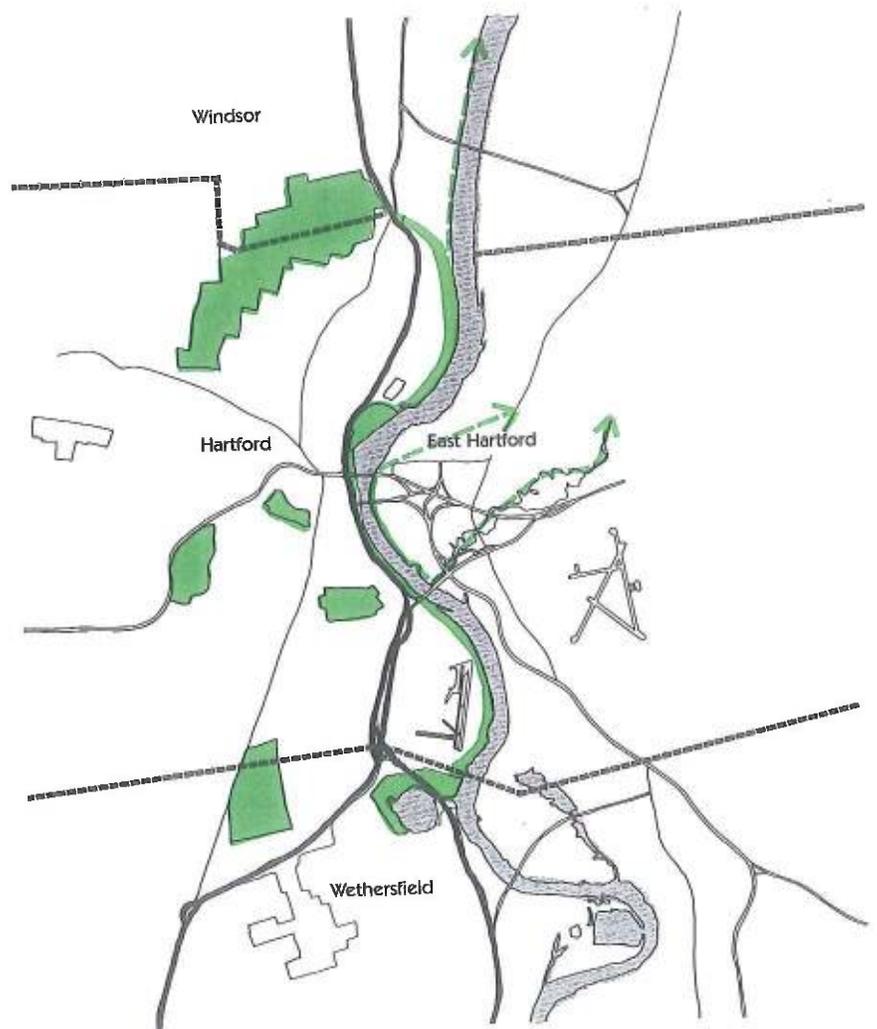
THE RECAPTURE PLAN

A long-term vision for the riverfront's future: a regional park linking communities and neighborhoods, evolving from carefully defined first steps in Hartford and East Hartford.

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER IS A resource shared by the Greater Hartford area. A riverfront recapture plan that looks toward creating a regional park system can be attractive not only to Hartford and East Hartford, but also to adjacent communities such as Wethersfield and Windsor.

For instance, the plan proposed here suggests a pathway from Riverside Park in Hartford to the Loomis School and Farmington River in Windsor. Similarly, a riverbank path south of Hartford could extend to the Folly Brook Natural Area at Wethersfield Cove. Although neither of these possible links has been studied in detail, each suggests how a riverfront recapture plan focused on the more central areas of Hartford and East Hartford could evolve into regional riverfront development.

This potential also underscores the importance of participation by state and regional agencies, such as the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the Connecticut River Assembly, or by private organizations, such as the Connecticut River Watershed Council. The riverfront represents a major opportunity for the State of Connecticut to expand the urban aspect of its parks program. Currently, a majority of the state parks are located in rural areas, more accessible to non-urban residents and workers.



Several neighboring states have urban parks programs that could be used as models. The Massachusetts Heritage Park program, for example, has supported local urban park development in many cities. New York State has a similar program of Urban Cultural Parks.

The Recapture Plan can become a resource for the entire Greater Hartford region.

A Land Use Plan for the Riverfront

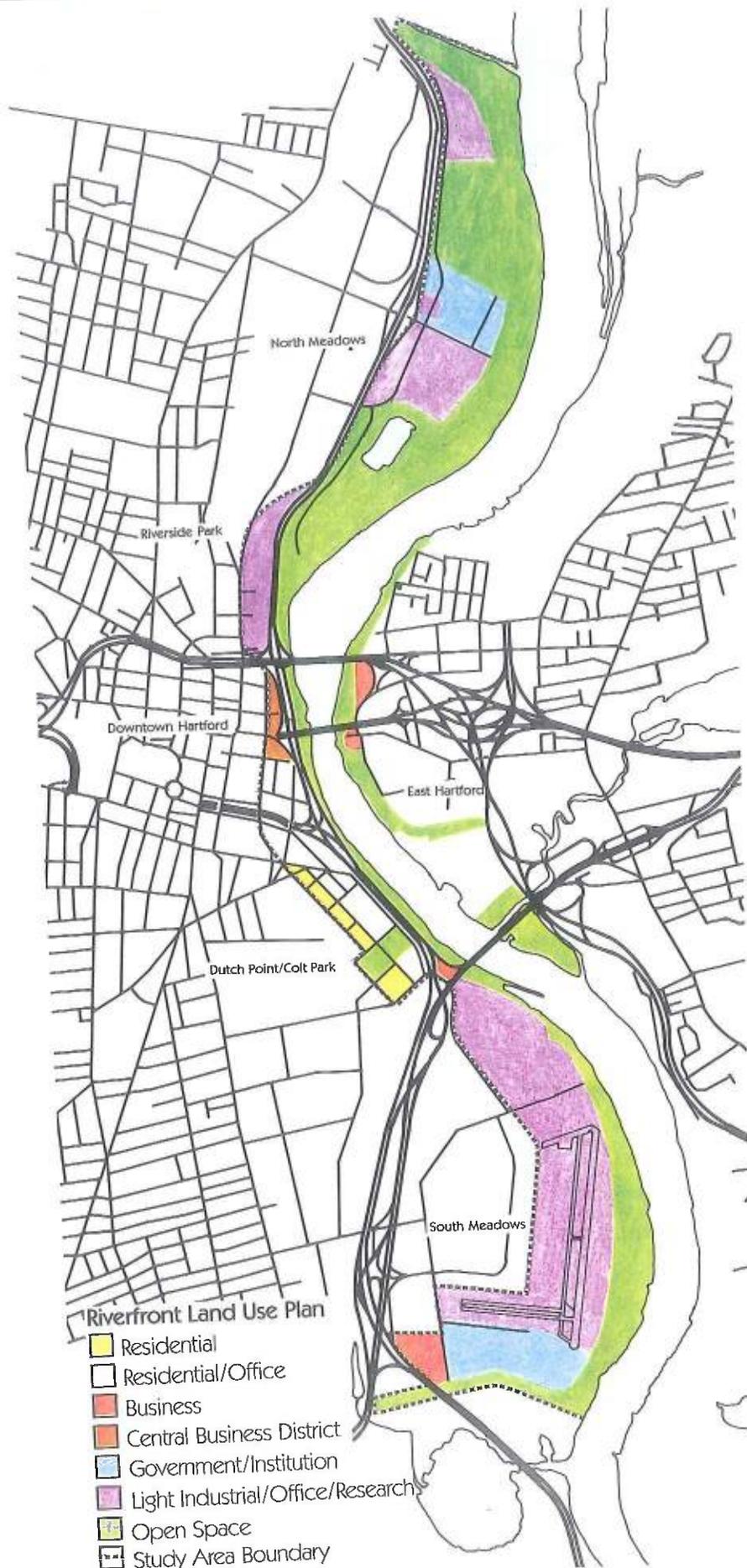
THE RECAPTURE PLAN HAS FOUR major objectives:

- to connect neighborhoods and urban areas to the water's edge, crossing expressway, rail-line and dike barriers;
- to establish riverfront attractions which will expand the region's recreational and educational opportunities;
- to link riverfront activities by means of a continuous linear park, making the entire river's edge available for biking, hiking, picnicking and exploring;
- to restore the riverfront's significance as an important part of the region's economic life.

The long-term land use plan illustrated in the adjacent map responds to each of these objectives. This plan is proposed for final adoption as part of the comprehensive plans of both Hartford and East Hartford; it was given preliminary approval by the Hartford Commission on the City Plan on November 9, 1982.

The land use plan describes long-term development goals for the Hartford-East Hartford riverfront. The most important element of the plan is the creation of a linear park along the riverfront's entire length, extending north to Windsor and south to Wethersfield, as well as between the Bulkeley Bridge and the Hockanum River in East Hartford. Development of the "Riverwalk," a continuous paved pathway running the length of the park, includes recreation facilities such as:

- expansion of Riverside Park as a regional amenity;
- development of a downtown visitors center, restaurant and commercial attraction overlooking a riverboat landing and amphitheater;
- riverfront restaurant and recreation facilities in the Charter Oak Bridge area;
- amphitheater, plaza, and marina development in East Hartford.



The Riverwalk

THE RIVERWALK, A LINEAR NETWORK of roads and pedestrian ways along the water's edge, is the basic framework for the Recapture Plan. It will allow easy access to the water's edge along the entire frontage.

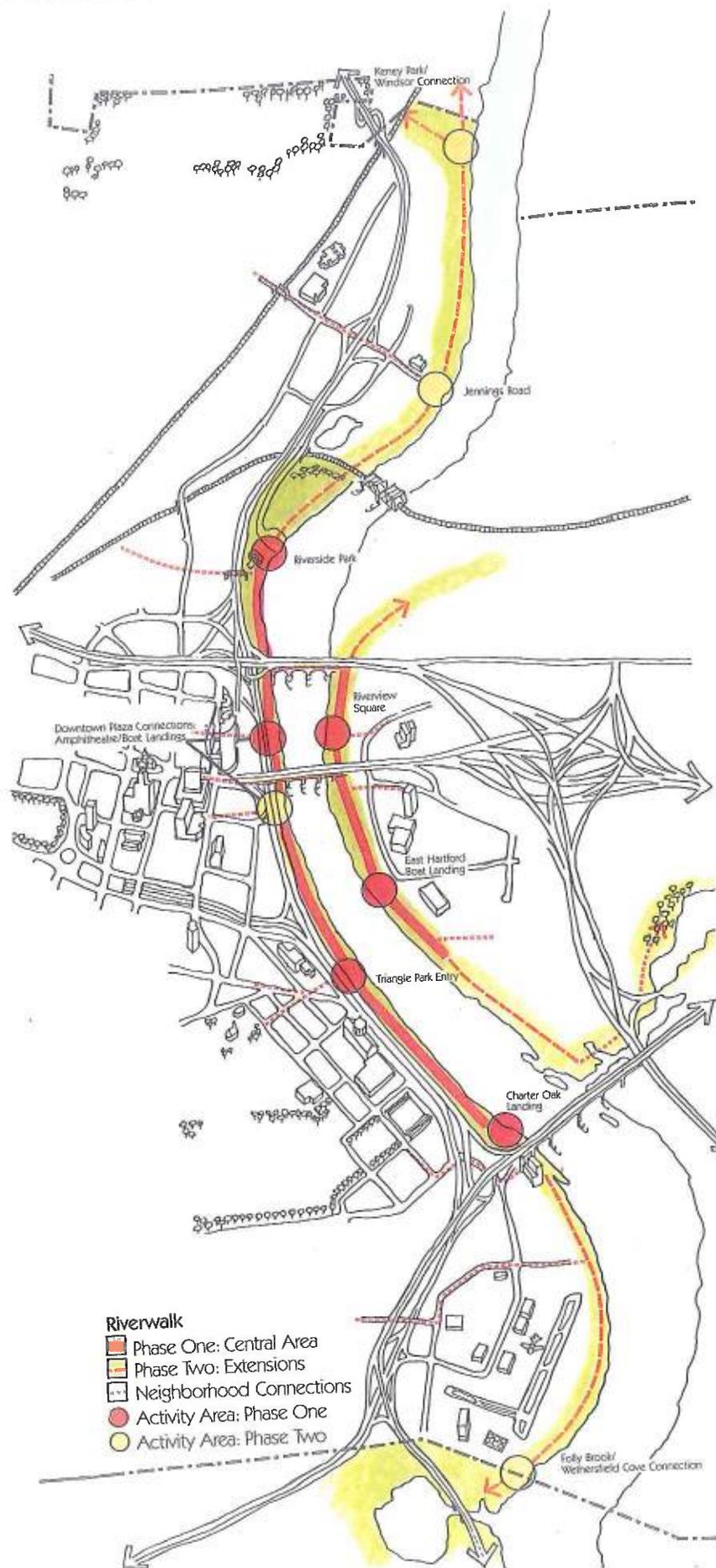
The design of the Riverwalk varies considerably over its length. In some areas it is designed as a wide, paved esplanade, allowing vehicle as well as bicycle and pedestrian use. In other places, it is a more modest cinder-and-gravel footpath. These variations reflect three factors: the constraints presented by existing conditions, the impact of these constraints on the cost of construction, and the probable intensity of use which each portion of the Riverwalk will receive.

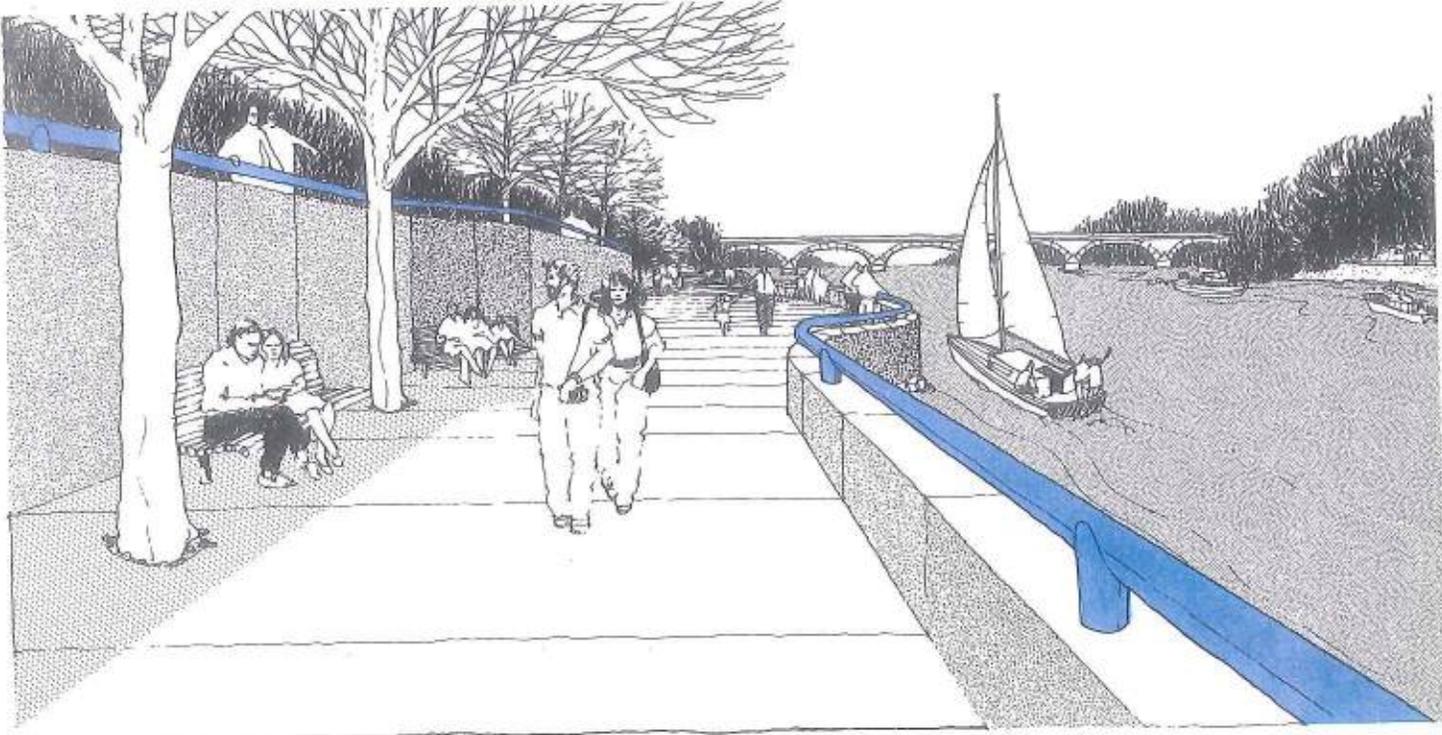
The idea of a riverfront promenade is not a new one: London, Paris, Boston and New York all have linear riverfront developments that encourage broad public access. Nineteenth-century Hartford shared this heritage. Historic photographs of Riverside Park show a pedestrian walkway along the river. The commercial waterfront downtown provided an exciting panorama of activity for local residents. The river's edge offered the opportunity to fish, boat, and swim; picnics and evening walks by the river were popular pastimes. The Riverwalk will restore this opportunity to residents of the region.

At regular intervals along the Riverwalk there will be a wide variety of specific developments, including amphitheatres, boat docks, fishing piers, marinas, modest food concessions, sitting and picnic areas, sports fields, and other recreational facilities. In some places, short loops are created to allow pedestrians and vehicles to circulate along a portion of the Riverwalk and return to adjacent neighborhoods.

Pedestrian travel along the existing sidewalk on the Bulkeley Bridge and along a new walkway on the Founders Bridge can provide strong links between the Hartford and East Hartford Riverwalks. Visitors would be able to cross either bridge, walk along the river's edge, and return via the other bridge, a pleasant lunchtime or evening expedition.

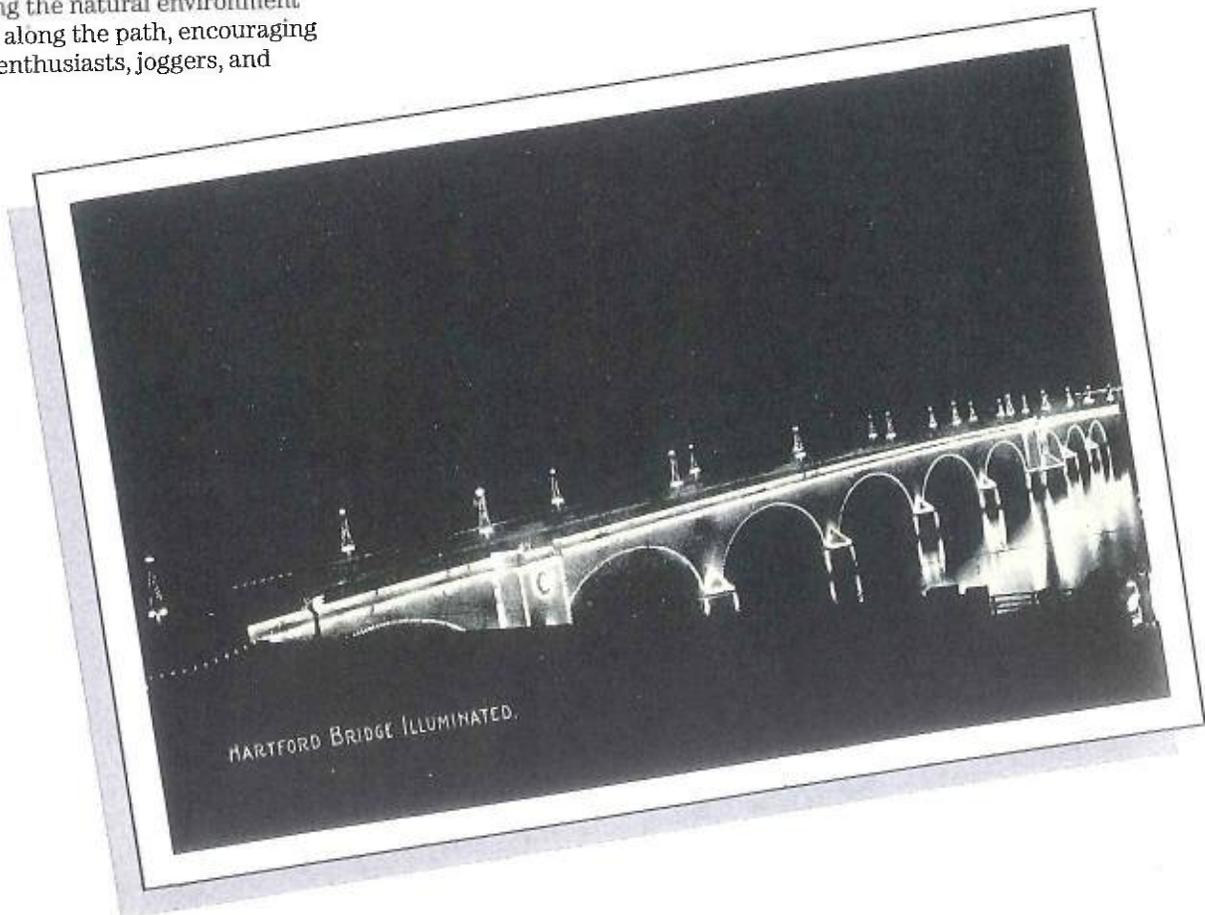
Development of the Riverwalk depends on overcoming a number of existing barriers at the river's edge. The most significant is the Bulkeley Bridge abutment on the Hartford side, which prevents the connection of





Riverside Park to the rest of the Riverwalk. Plans call for the construction of an elevated walkway around the bridge abutment, completing this important link.

The northern and southern extremities of the Riverwalk are proposed as narrow, soft-surfaced footpaths flanked by modest sitting areas. These less intensive developments north of Riverside Park and south of the Charter Oak Bridge are designed to respect the natural environment, preserving the existing vegetation and wildlife habitats. Signs describing the natural environment will be located along the path, encouraging use by nature enthusiasts, joggers, and hikers.



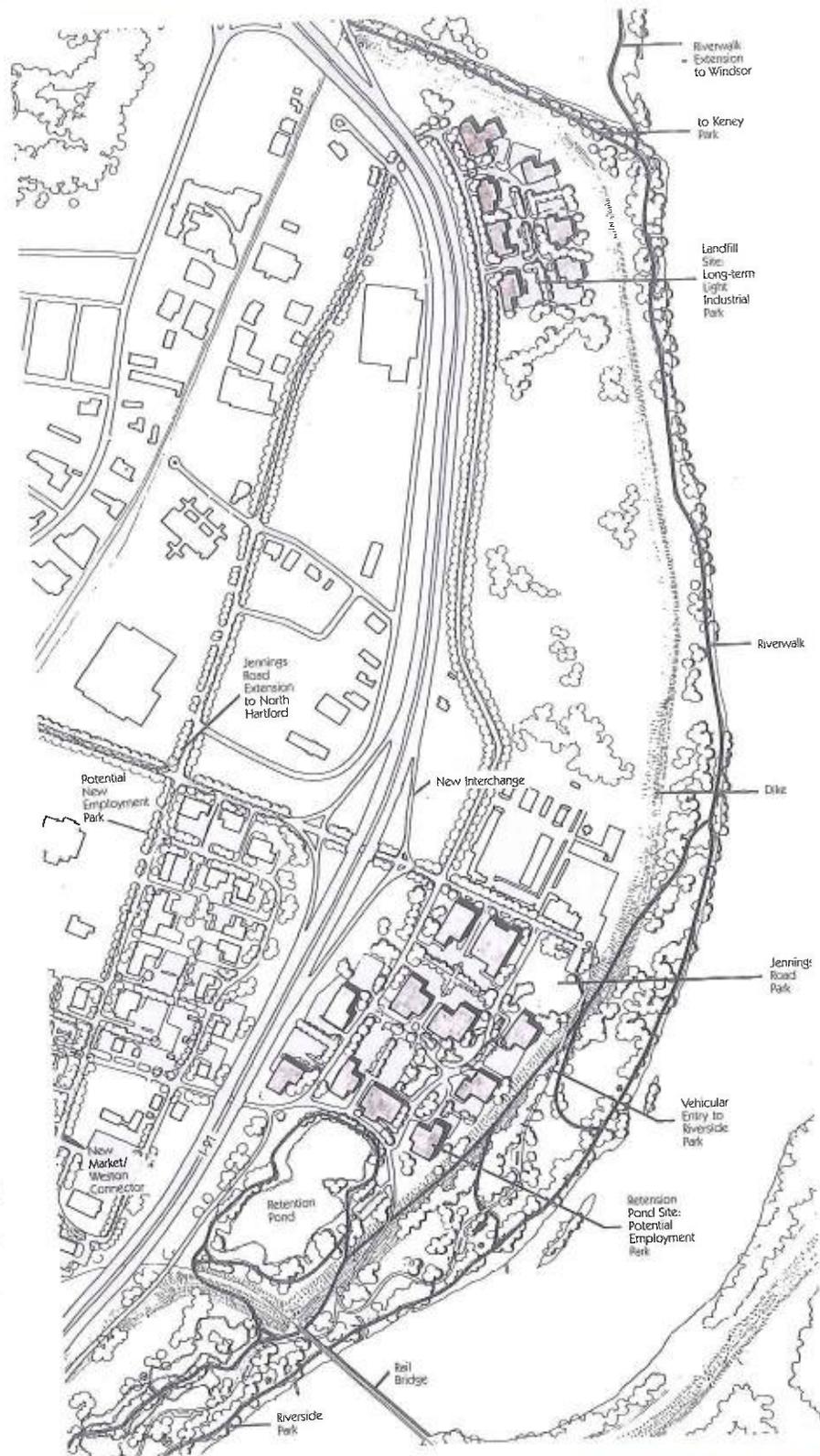
North Meadows

HARTFORD'S NORTH MEADOWS, located at the northern boundary of the city, is a predominantly industrial zone. The earth-berm dike protects this land from the river. Development has been hampered because of poor access; the area has never achieved its full potential as an important employment center for the city. By the late 1980s, with the expected widening of I-91 and completion of the new Jennings Road interchange, the North Meadows can provide new development opportunities.

Short-Term Development

Although the initial effort along the riverbank would be concentrated in the area south of the North Meadows, from Riverside Park to the Charter Oak Bridge, the clearing of a modest path leading to Keney Park near Hartford's northern boundary could extend the Riverwalk to the Windsor line by 1986. Much of the development potential of the area on the city side of the dike rests on improving access to I-91. However, completion of the new Market/Weston Street connector in 1984 will begin to improve local access and increase development potential.

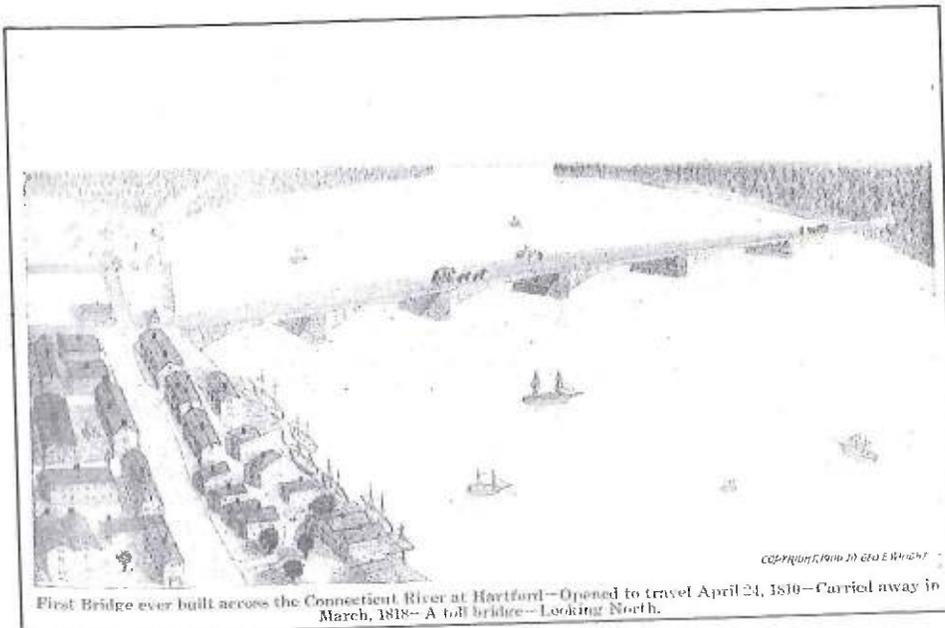
An unresolved issue is the disposition of the retention pond site, a 50-acre tract of land south of Jennings Road, under consideration by the city for a bus-maintenance site. From the point of view both of riverfront development and of employment growth, such an operation is not the highest and best use for this site. It could be better utilized as a generator of private development tax revenues and job opportunities.



Long-Term Development

Extending Jennings Road will provide a new connection from North Hartford across the railroad tracks and the new highway interchange to new employment sites and the river. This connection should be landscaped as an attractive boulevard with adjacent sidewalks to encourage automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian use, and to provide access to both jobs and recreation. At the dike's edge across from the police station, a small park is shown. The plan proposes that Jennings Road continue diagonally over the dike to provide a second vehicular entry to Riverside Park.

North of the public works properties on Jennings Road is the 75-acre landfill site. The northern 25 acres of this tract could be available for development in 12 to 15 years. Its location and access make it an attractive site for approximately 280,000 square feet of light industrial development (creating the potential for up to 500 jobs). The remaining landfill area, however, due to soil instability and potential methane gas problems, cannot be used for building or park development in the foreseeable future.



First Bridge ever built across the Connecticut River at Hartford—Opened to travel April 24, 1810—Carried away in March, 1818—A toll bridge—Looking North.

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Riverside Park

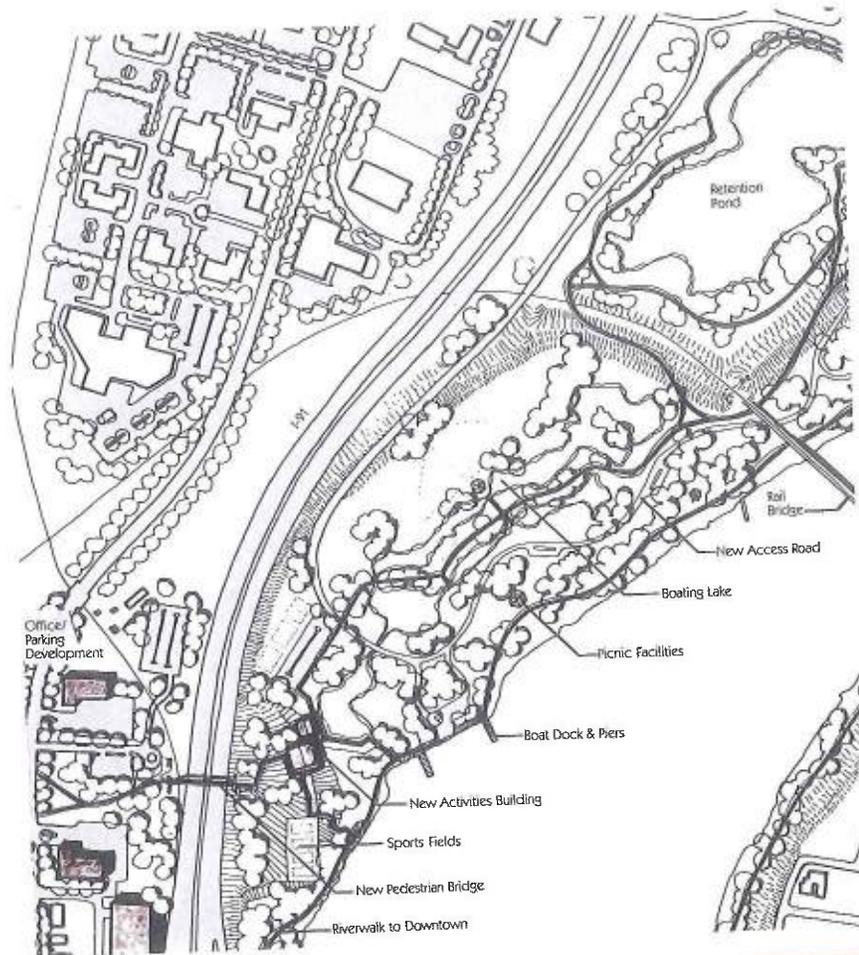
RIVERSIDE PARK, POTENTIALLY A GREAT amenity for the Hartford region, was once an important and beautiful pleasure ground, heavily used and widely enjoyed. Although years of neglect and the construction of floodwalls and highways have led to its deterioration, it is still an important and unique resource. It is the only large, publicly accessible tract of land on the river side of the dike system near downtown and existing residential neighborhoods. The Recapture Plan proposes a major reconstruction of the park. It would be the northern "anchor" for the central Riverwalk system.

Short-Term Development

Physical improvements planned for Riverside Park focus first in the area surrounding the existing boat-launching site. The goal should be to provide more boating, fishing, and sports attractions for both the nearby neighborhoods and visitors using the Riverwalk. Two important new access points are proposed: a footbridge across I-91 and an elevated walkway and emergency vehicle road around the Bulkeley Bridge abutment. Together these should increase the use of the Park, reinforcing access from both downtown and the adjacent Clay/Arsenal neighborhood.

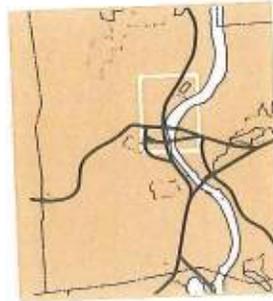
The new footbridge, to be constructed as part of the planned highway improvements, will be completed when I-91 in the North Meadows is widened. The proposed bridge, replacing the existing deteriorated bridge, will be a well-lighted, wider connection encouraging access from North Hartford neighborhoods. New active sports facilities, including basketball, handball and tennis courts, and baseball and soccer fields, are planned at the eastern end of the new bridge. Near the dike a new parking area will replace the existing oversized and poorly located lot.

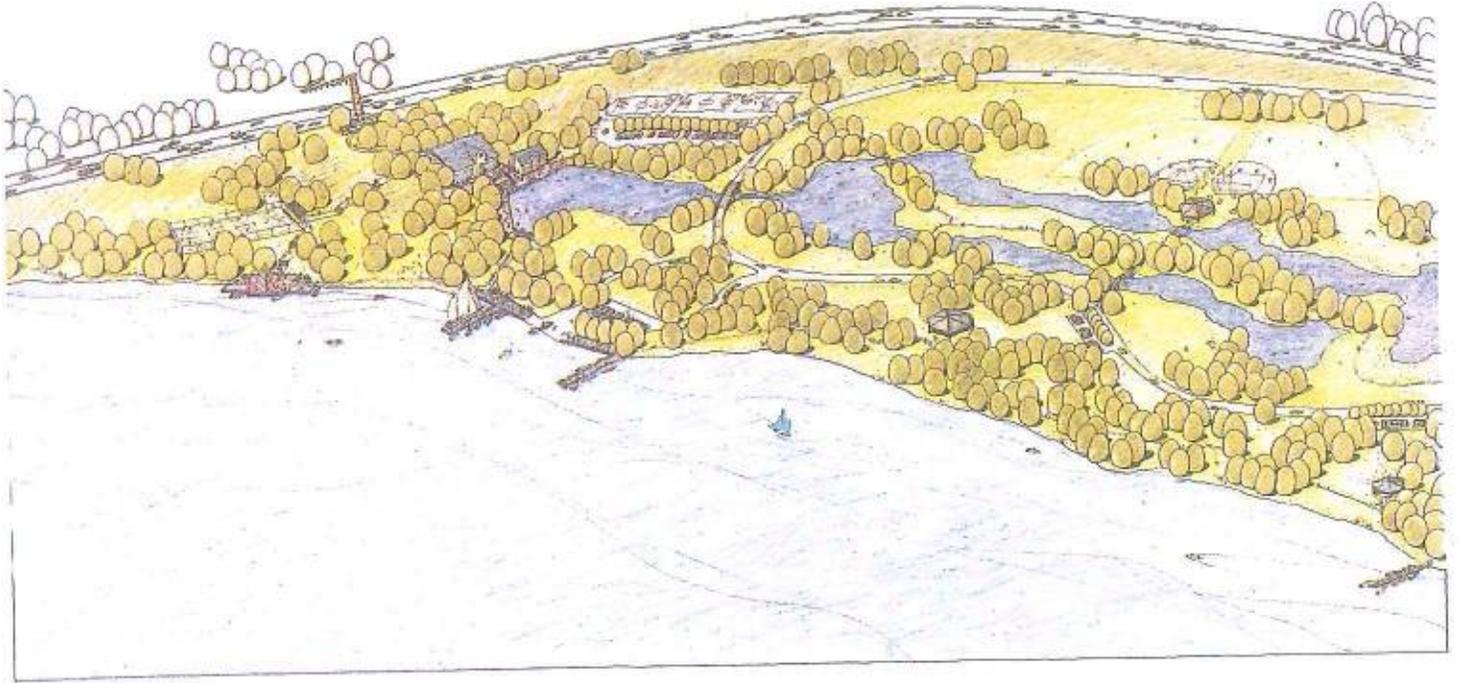
A new activities building with an open-sided, roofed picnic area can replace the deteriorated pool house. The pool, which has been closed for a number of years, could be relocated. The expense and difficulty of maintaining this facility within the floodplain indicates that it might be better located west of the dike system, within the neighborhood



it was meant to serve. Plans to relocate the pool will require a firm commitment from the City of Hartford to ensure its replacement prior to the demolition of the existing facility. The proposed new building would provide a sheltered area for games, cookouts and large community gatherings. It could also serve as a headquarters for events and festivals in the park.

At the water's edge, a new, permanent fishing pier, dock and boardwalk will provide a focus for riverfront activity. New and attractive signs and footpaths are proposed throughout the park, inviting use by nature enthusiasts, hikers, joggers and cyclists. By 1986, a new image for the park ought to be firmly established. These improvements will provide the necessary facilities for a wide range of events and activities, including the 350th Anniversary celebration.





New sports facilities, docks and piers, and a boating pond can make Riverside Park a regional attraction.

PLAYING BY 'OUR RIVER'
Rose Witkower

The Connecticut River meant a great deal to the children in the latter part of the 1890s. It was there that the city of Hartford voted to turn a part of the area of meadowland into a playground. . . .

Riverside Park became a dearly beloved spot for the kids and elders. After working long hours in the factories, tobacco fields and doing street work, the cool breeze off the river was a godsend.

What fun it was to hire a boat for 25 cents an hour and spend that time rowing between the two bridges. Then the next day we would proudly show our blistered hands to our friends to prove that we had been on the river

Riverside Park, the Wading Pond, General View, Hartford, Conn.



Long-Term Development

Historic photographs recall memories of the large pond which was once the central focus of the park's original design. The pond provided a tranquil and attractive site for boating, fishing, wading, and strolling. The Recapture Plan calls for restoration of this important feature in the years to come. A 10-acre boating and fishing lake is proposed, similar to lakes in New York's Central Park or in Boston's Public Garden. The lake will be surrounded by small parking and picnic areas, footpaths, and gazebos, restoring the 19th-century spirit of the park. Within the lake, a series of small islands will provide interesting destinations for people renting rowboats from a seasonal concession. The lake will allow people to boat close to the river safely for eight or nine months of the year. In winter, it will provide a place for ice skating and other sports.

At the south end of the lake, the new activities building would be expanded to include the boat-rental shop, restrooms, and a modest snack bar and restaurant. A large sitting area in front of the building at the edge of the lake is also proposed. Visitors will be able to purchase food and drinks and dine while enjoying views of the river and the downtown skyline. With the completion of the Riverwalk around the Bulkeley Bridge and its connection over the highway to downtown, this area will be a 15-minute walk from downtown. Visitors can return to downtown via the footbridge and Market Street.

At the river's edge, additional docks and fishing piers, as well as a boardwalk along the bank, are planned. The new extension of Jennings Road will eventually connect to the existing park entry road, providing a looped access system. Visitors arriving by car can drive through the area and park in small lots along the way to picnic by the river.

At the western edge beside the dike, a large open space will be created which can be used both for sports and for events and festivals. Afternoon concerts in this area will have the lake and the river as a backdrop and

allow visitors to use the dike as a natural amphitheater for seating. The River Lore Festival, a new river-related seasonal event, is suggested for this area.

At the entry to the rebuilt footbridge between I-91 and Market Street, a landscaped plaza is proposed. Adjacent parking areas will provide additional capacity during major events in the park. Accompanying these improvements is the potential development of 100,000 square feet of new buildings on the now-vacant sites nearby. These sites, made marketable by the completion of the Market/Weston Street connector road, can help create an increased working population in the area.

With the completion of the lake, activities building, plaza and piers, Riverside Park will again become a major focus of river-related recreation. As a new attraction along the Riverwalk, it will serve as an important destination for visitors from the north and south. Better road connections and improved parking facilities will improve its image. Permanently staffed food and boat-rental concessions, coupled with expanded sports facilities, will make the park more active, safe and comfortable. It will still maintain its traditional function as a neighborhood park while also serving as a city-wide facility.

Riverside Park around the turn of the century, featuring a riverfront promenade,



Downtown Hartford

DOWNTOWN HARTFORD REPRESENTS an important long-term opportunity for recapture efforts. Because downtown is a central focus for the region, activity at the water's edge for the thousands of office workers, shoppers, visitors, and residents can have a symbolic importance found nowhere else on the riverfront.

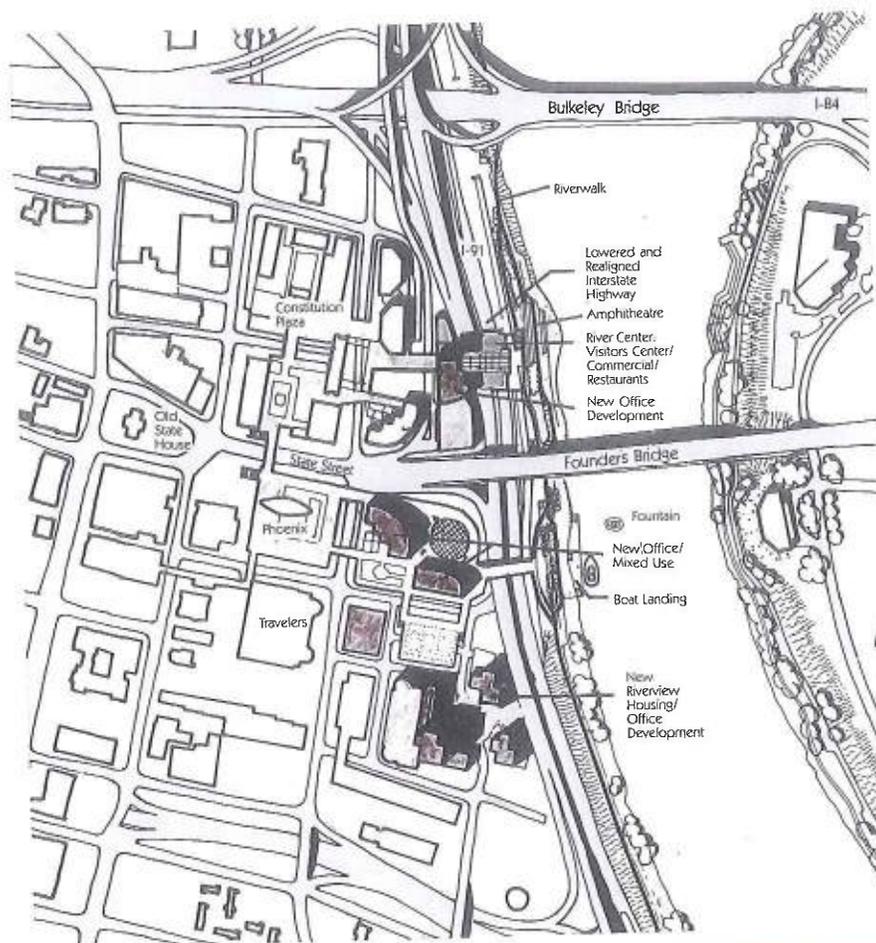
Constraints on riverfront development near downtown are formidable. Access to the water's edge is prevented by an elevated interstate highway, a freight rail line, and a concrete dike. Riverfront Recapture, Inc. has encouraged the city and state to lobby the Federal government for adoption of a plan to lower and realign Interstate 91 adjacent to downtown, in an effort to minimize this barrier. Whether or not this effort is immediately successful, its long-term implementation must be an important, continuing priority: without it, downtown riverfront access is permanently compromised.

When highway improvements are made, deck and walkway extensions of Constitution Plaza crossing the highway, rail, and dike barriers will be possible. In addition, up to 3.5 acres of new development land will be created by the relocation of I-91. At downtown densities, this land could accommodate up to 1.5 million square feet of new commercial development, too important an economic resource to lose.

Short-Term Development

In the short term, before highway reconstruction occurs, downtown riverfront access can still be developed. Proposals call for an above-grade walkway, extending north of the new Hartford Steam Boiler building one level above Constitution Plaza, stepping down to the riverbank once over the highway barrier. In the long term, once the highway plan is implemented, the link can become an enclosed walkway at the plaza level. This short-term solution can both provide the structure and act as the roof for the later walkway one level below.

At the water's edge, the interim walkway would lead to a 600-seat amphitheater—a convenient downtown location for public concerts, plays and rallies, and a pleasant place to sit in the sun, eat lunch, and relax.



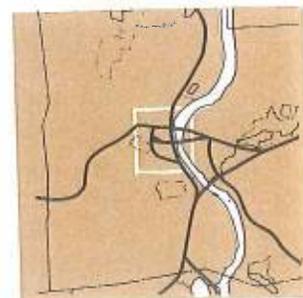
Long-Term Development

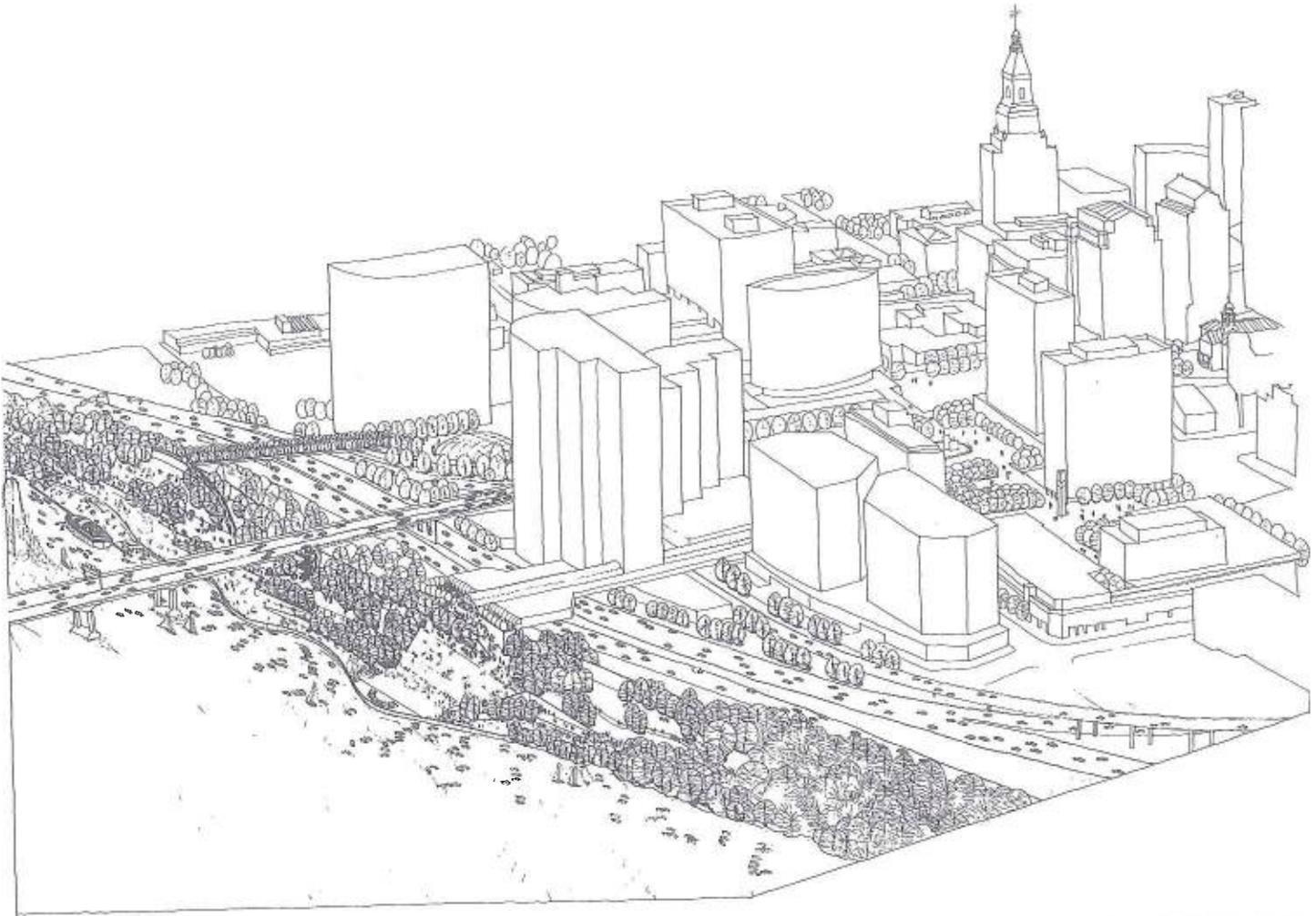
Once the highway system is revised and new building sites are created, downtown can become a major focus for riverfront access and development.

The State Street Axis

With the removal of interstate ramps and elevated overpasses, State Street can again assume its historic role as Hartford's major boulevard leading to the river. New landscaping extending from the Old State House to the river can accentuate this role.

To further emphasize the view from the Old State House, a 60-foot-high water-jet fountain is proposed, to be located in the river near the East Hartford bank, in line with the Old State House view down State





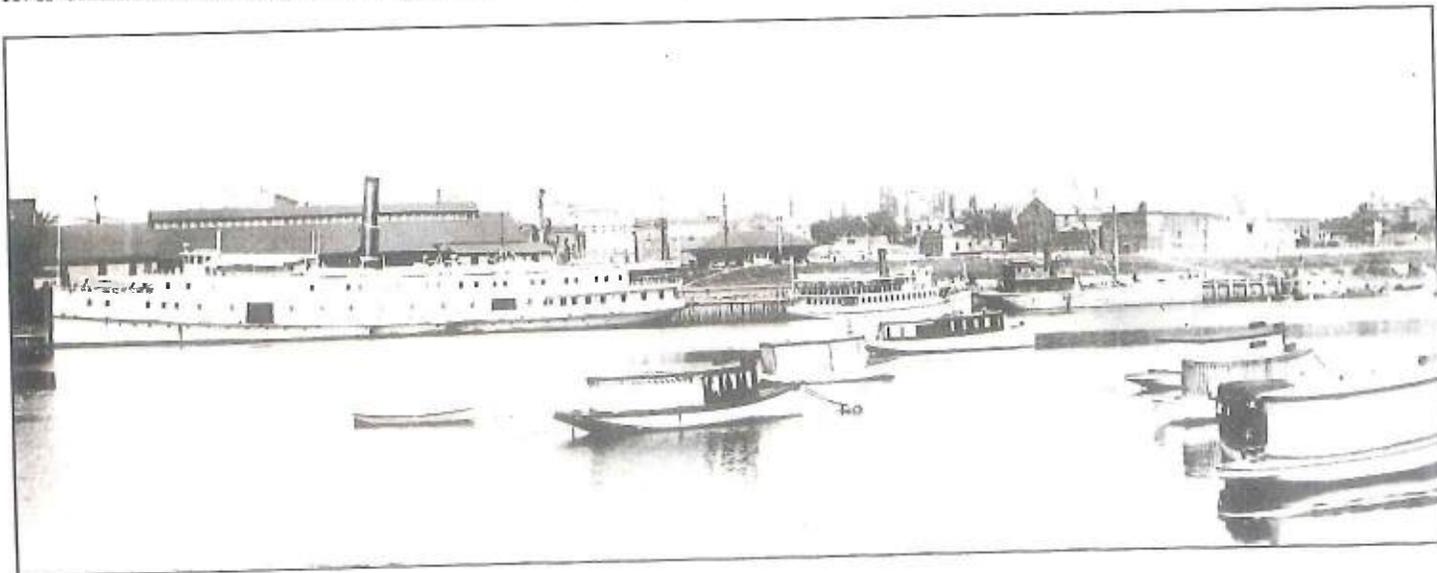
Street. This fountain would signal the presence of the river to downtown Hartford, beckoning visitors to walk down State Street and along Founders Bridge sidewalks to the unseen resource that awaits. Historic ships, permanently moored by the river, provide a popular tourist attraction. Their masts would be visible over the dike.

The sweeping curves of the new Hartford Steam Boiler building can be used as a design motif for a gateway complex of new river-oriented structures, containing office,

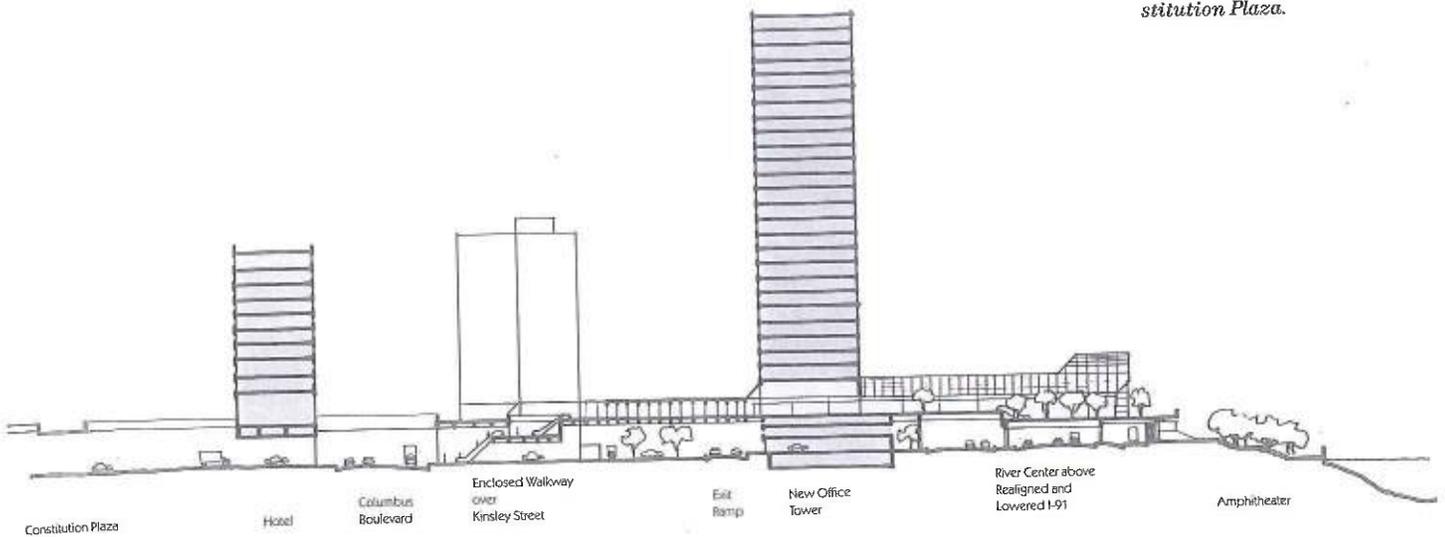
hotel, or residential uses. This would mark the ceremonial State Street entry into the Hartford central business district. To achieve this goal, the designs of the two new "riverfront sites"—created from former highway land north and south of the Founders Bridge—need to be coordinated. The continuation of Constitution Plaza to the site east of the Phoenix building will make possible an additional walkway to the riverfront. Deck-level development might include a health club, performing arts facility, or restaurants.

Long-term plans for the downtown riverfront can provide new opportunities for development, river access, and facilities at the water's edge.

The busy port of Hartford in 1910.



The proposed River Center can bridge the realigned highway, linking the riverfront to new development sites and to Constitution Plaza.



The River Center

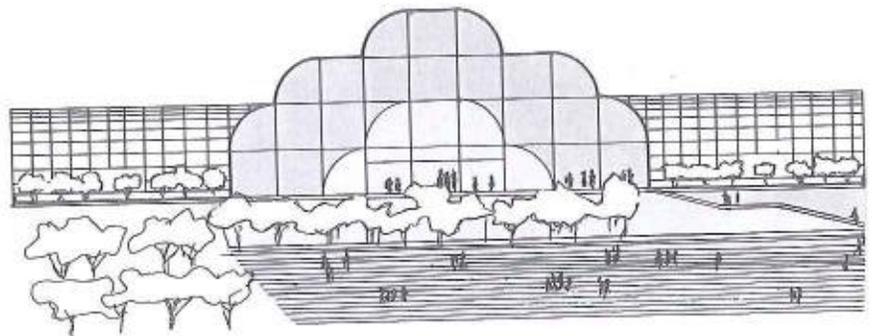
Once highway improvements are completed, a new enclosed walkway built at the Constitution Plaza level north of the Hartford Steam Boiler building can culminate at the dike's edge in a two-story greenhouse structure, filled with shops, restaurants, and river exhibits, built on an air-rights deck over the new ground-level highway.

This new riverfront attraction will help draw office workers, shoppers, and visitors from downtown to activities on the water's edge. It will provide a year-round amenity for dining and shopping, overlooking the river and the new amphitheater.

Riverview Towers: New Downtown Housing

South of the Phoenix site is another development site with special potential for downtown river-related mixed-income housing. It is owned by a combination of city and corporate interests and could be developed in a mix of office and residential uses, providing 600-800 dwelling units.

Shown in the illustrative plan is a design for three housing towers with river views, flanked by adjacent eight-story wings and structured parking. The plan proposes that the site be developed under a subsidy formula that allocates 20 percent of the total units for low- and moderate-income families.



The view down the State Street axis.

LIVING THE RIVER
 Jeanne Santoro Casarino,
 Weathersfield

I live on Charles Street overlooking the river where I could look out the window and see the old Hartford Yacht Club, with all types of boats cruising up and down the river. The boat race and regatta were an annual event. People come from all over to see and enjoy the beautiful display of boats...

East Hartford

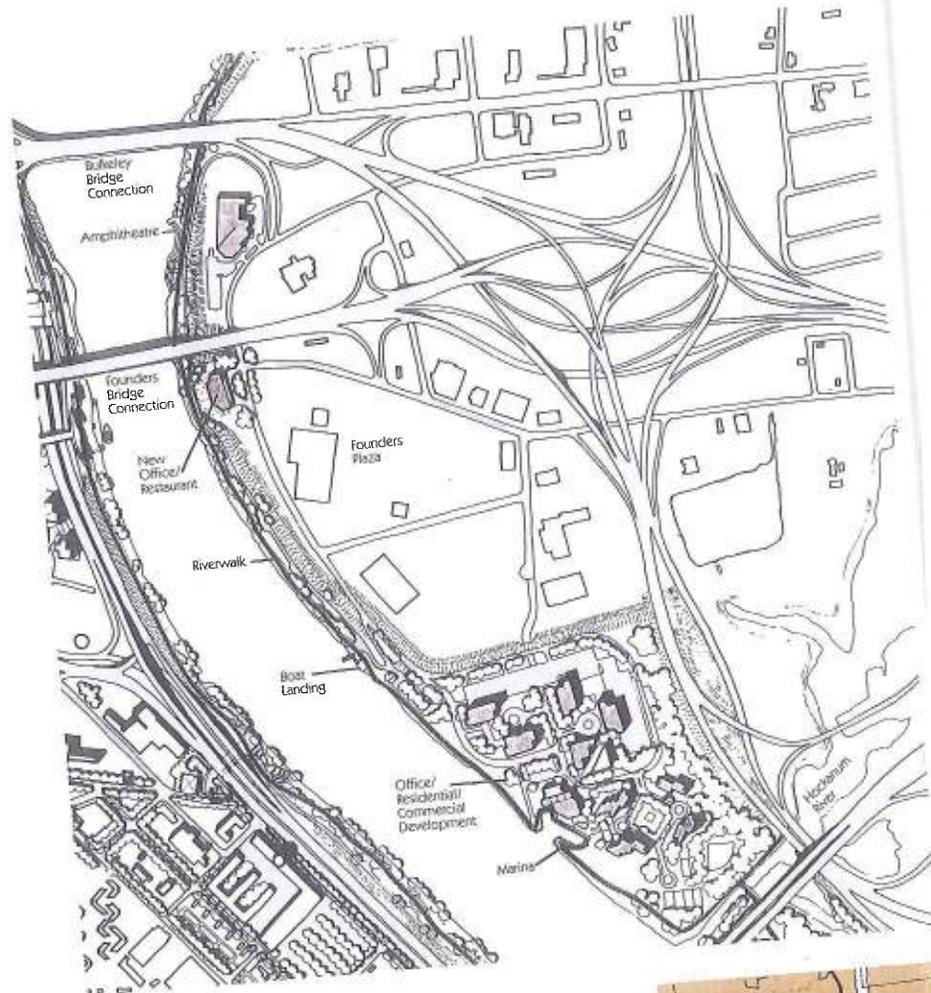
A KEY INGREDIENT OF THE Comprehensive Recapture Plan is the uniting of the east and west banks of the river through a coordinated set of improvements. Historically, much of the commercial activity in the Hartford region focused on downtown Hartford. Today, the East Hartford riverbank is more accessible and often more heavily used than the west side of the river. The views from there of the Hartford skyline are unparalleled in the region. Recent commercial development east of the earth dike has brought more people to the riverbank. Plans for the east bank call for varied developments from the Bulkeley Bridge south to the Charter Oak Bridge and along the Hockanum River. New sidewalks and roads will join the improvements on each side of the river, creating a regional system.

Short-Term Development

Fourth of July celebrations in recent years have featured many daytime activities at the East Hartford boat-launching site, south of Founders Plaza. Site conditions, however, make the area nearly unusable much of the year. Silt from spring floods collects on the bank, creating dust or mud. The temporary docking facilities accommodate only the smallest boats. The area is unlighted and provides no developed parking or sitting areas.

The first improvements planned for East Hartford will occur here. It could be a desirable facility for weekend, lunchtime and evening use. Adjacent to the launching ramp, a new paved parking area is proposed for cars and boat trailers. A comfortable picnic area will offer views of the river and the city skyline. A new permanent dock will provide an improved boat-landing and fishing area.

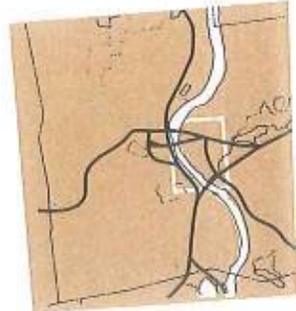
North of the launching ramp, the east section of the Riverwalk will extend to the end of the Bulkeley Bridge. Initial efforts will include clearing and landscaping this route. Extensions south to the Hockanum River are proposed as soft-surfaced footpaths developed in conjunction with private landowners. The Riverwalk in Hartford and East Hartford will be connected via the sidewalk on the Bulkeley Bridge, enabling joggers, pedestrians and cyclists to travel throughout the area of development.



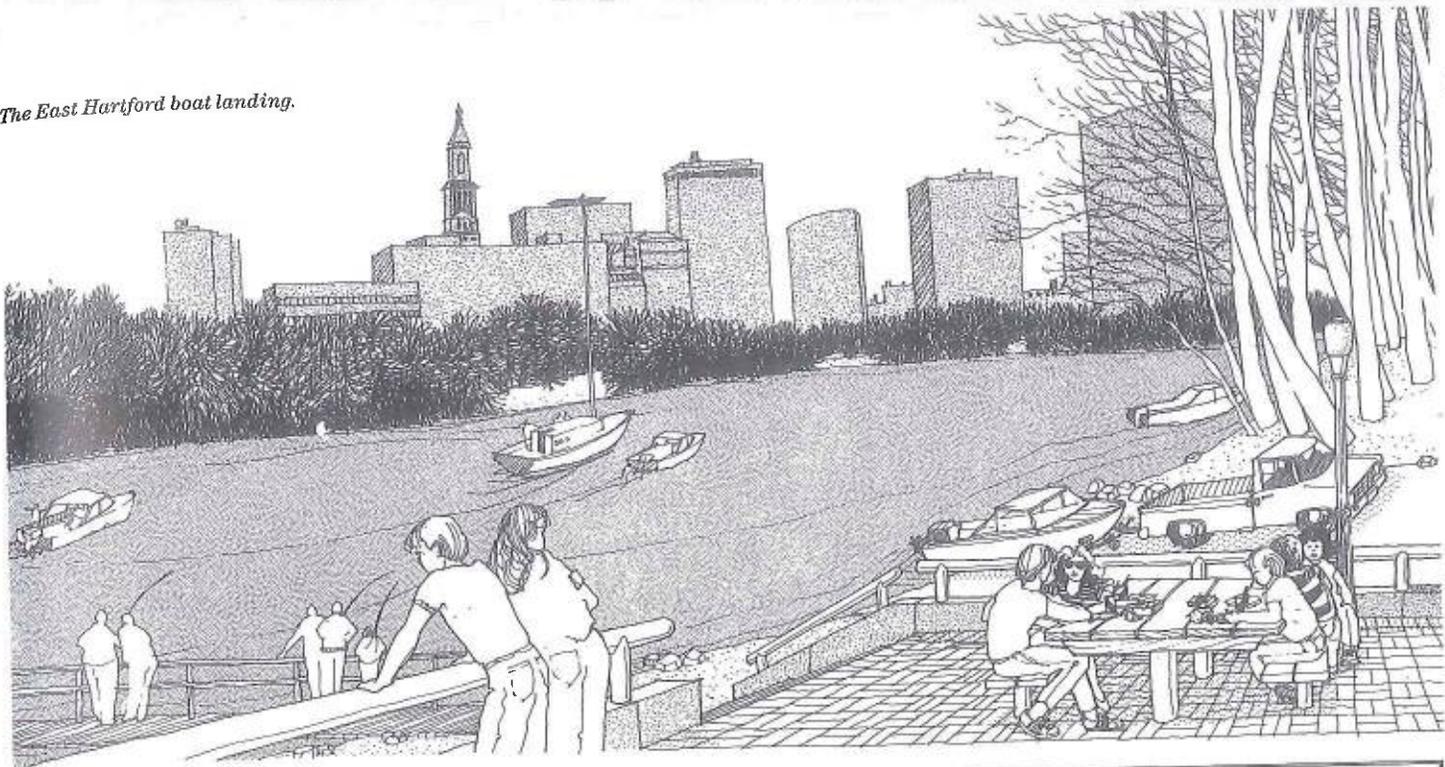
Long-Term Development

Long-term plans call for the central area to become a paved esplanade with auto access near the Bulkeley Bridge and at the boat-launching area. The ends of the Riverwalk will be developed with more modest and narrow footpaths. Eventual development could extend the system north of the Bulkeley Bridge and east along the Hockanum River.

Near the eastern end of the Bulkeley Bridge a new plaza, dock, and stepped sitting area are proposed. This will closely parallel the developments on the opposite side of the river. The sitting area and the plaza will face west, overlooking the river and downtown Hartford. There can be a small amphitheater for afternoon and weekend concerts and events.



The East Hartford boat landing.

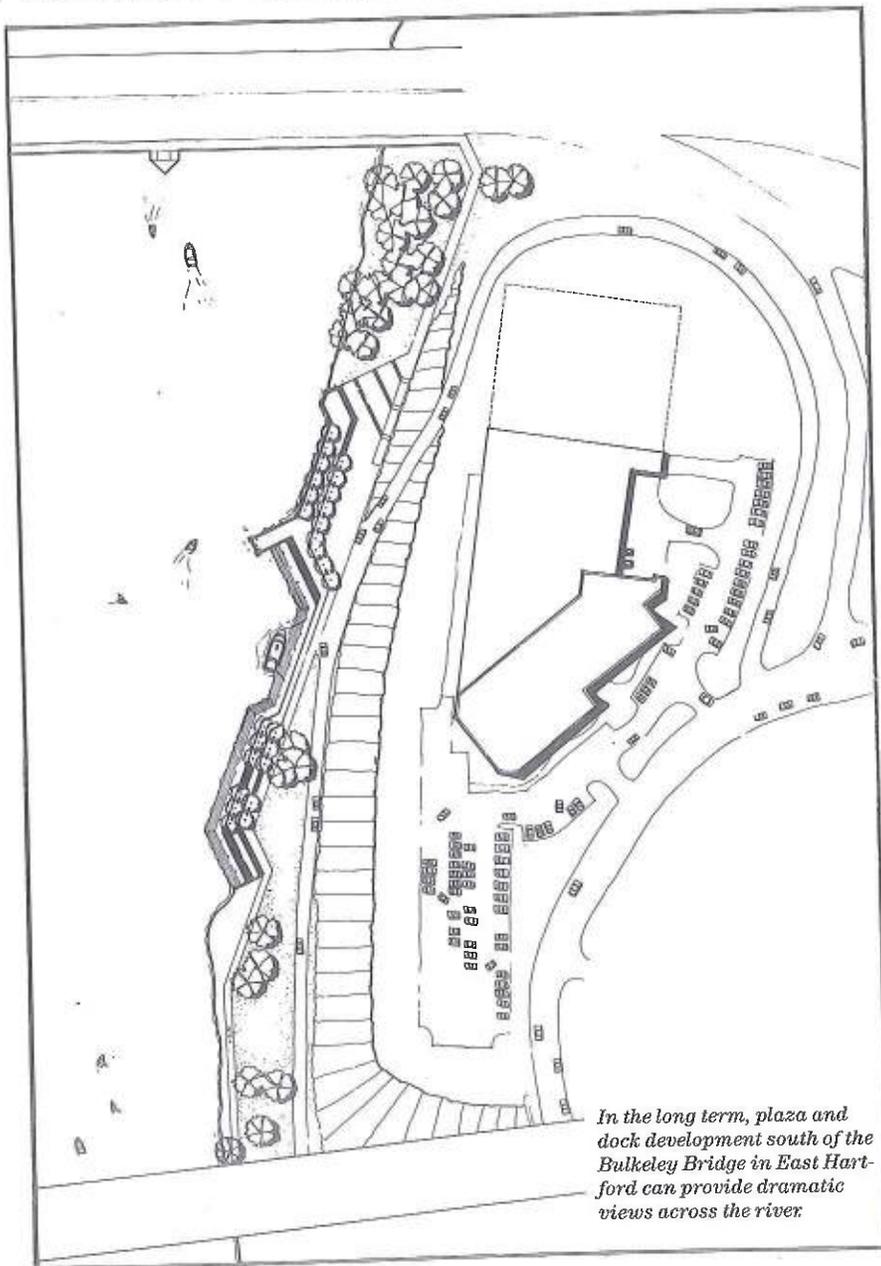


South of the Founders Bridge lies a vacant building site which could support over 100,000 square feet of new office or commercial development. It is the only site in East Hartford protected by a concrete, rather than an earth-berm, dike. The dramatic views possible from the upper floors of any new building invite the inclusion of a riverside restaurant.

The improvements proposed to the Hartford interstate system could include the development of pedestrian walkways on the Founders Bridge once the ramps at the west end are removed. These sidewalks on the bridge will add important connections between the riverwalks on each side and will do much to create a regional system. Stairways at both the east and west ends of the bridge will complete these connections.

The boat-launch area will be further improved in years to come. Additional seating and parking are to be provided. Proposals call for a continuous road along the river's edge with small parking and picnic areas at regular intervals.

Further south, private developers have proposed a large, mixed-use series of projects on the 50-acre site between the boat-launching area and the Charter Oak Bridge. The preliminary long-term concept includes four office towers, high-rise residential structures, and a private marina. A new access road over the top of the dike to serve this development will also greatly improve access to the boat launch and Riverwalk. Public pedestrian access along the river's edge past this development must be an important riverfront objective.



In the long term, plaza and dock development south of the Bulkeley Bridge in East Hartford can provide dramatic views across the river.

Dutch Point/ Colt Park

THE DUTCH POINT/COLT PARK AREA IS at the southern end of the more intensively-developed central riverfront zone. Existing access beneath the Charter Oak Bridge and beneath the highway north of the Colt Building are important assets. Sites on both sides of the dike offer potential for recreation, housing, or office use.

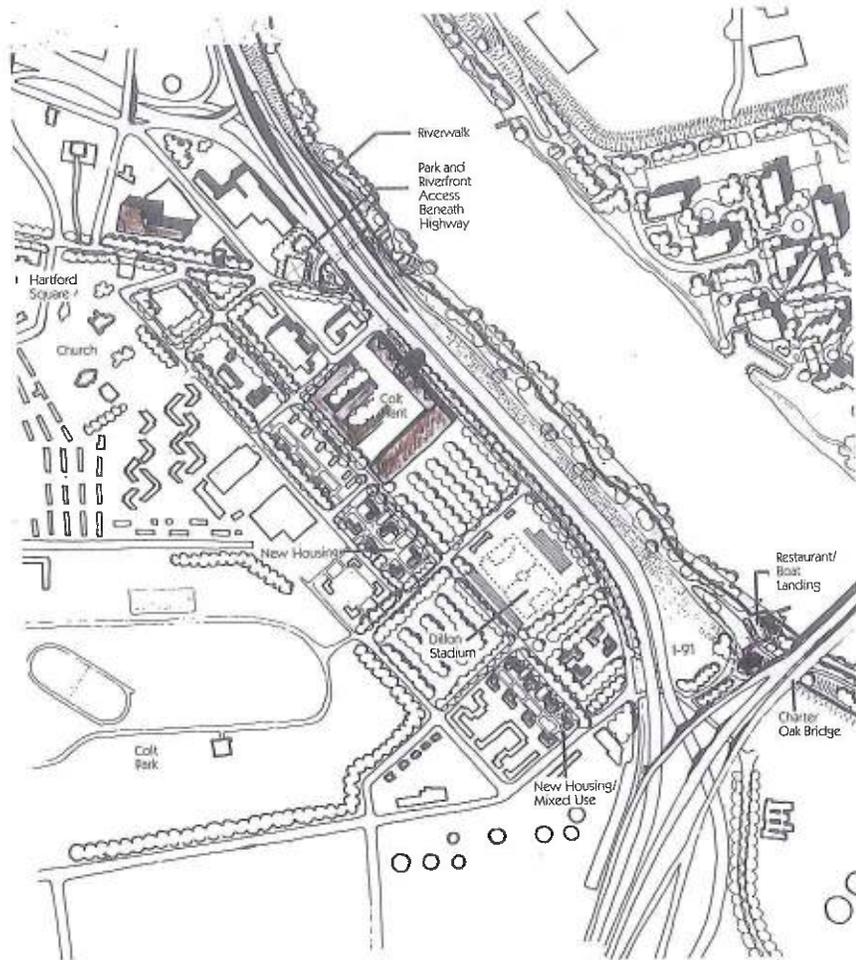
The community contains both stable subsidized housing units and an increasing number of new renovations, especially in areas to the northwest of Colt Park. In conjunction with riverfront development, incentives should be applied to vacant sites to encourage new mixed-income housing construction. These new units, a proportion of which should be reserved for low- and moderate-income families, would reinforce the existing neighborhood structure.

Short-Term Development

Immediate development opportunities take advantage of existing automobile access at the Charter Oak Bridge site. People in cars can cross the dike at this point and after additional road construction will be able to drive along the water's edge to new boating and recreation areas.

Beneath the Charter Oak Bridge, Hartford's first modern riverfront restaurant can be built on top of the earthen dike overlooking the river. A new boathouse and launching facility for crew shells and other boats would be located at the foot of the dike. A new visitors center could be located adjacent to the riverfront entry road, linked by a walkway to the restaurant/boathouse complex. The adjacent boat landing would serve tour boats and small river craft and provide a fishing pier.

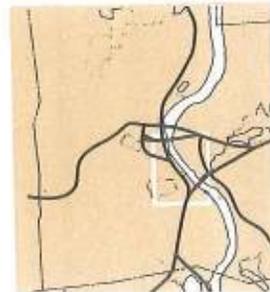
The new riverfront entry north of the Colt plant and beneath the interstate highway might feature a landscaped park, to be built on a triangular site now used for cable storage by Northeast Utilities. An agreement would have to be reached with NEU for such use to be possible. Assuming this development is feasible, the existing service passage beneath the highway can be enlivened through the use of creative design and decoration. Parking beneath the highway would allow visitors who arrive by car easy access to the riverfront.

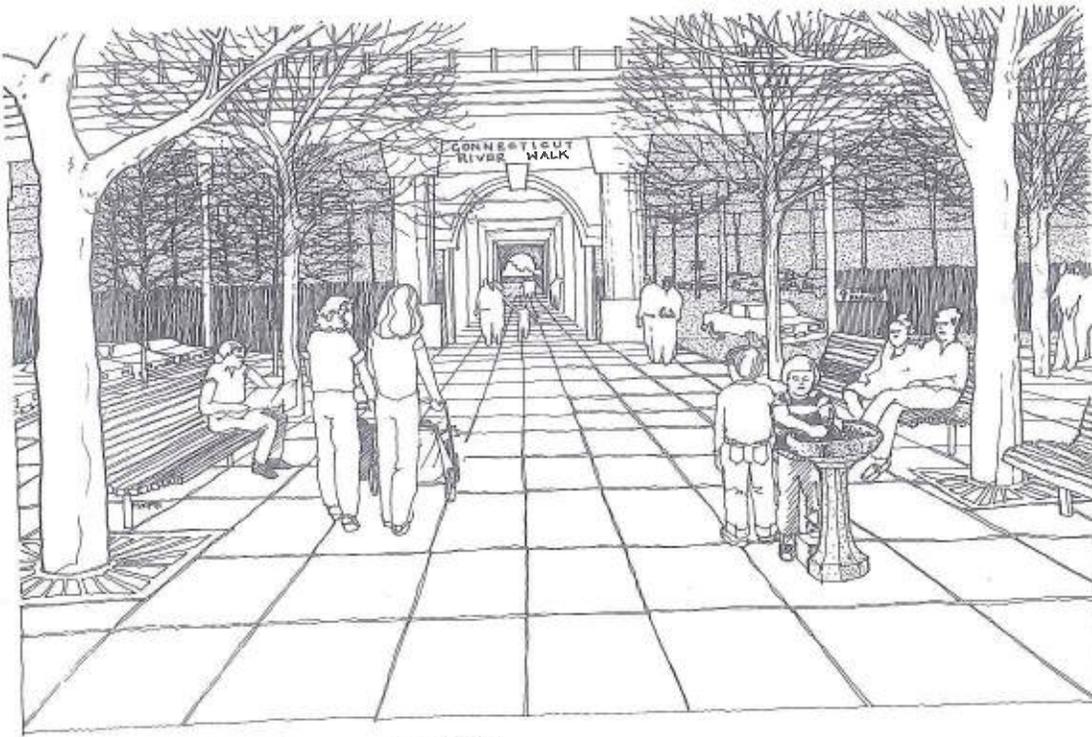


Long-Term Development

As the Riverwalk system attracts more visitors, additional sports fields and recreational facilities can be added on the riverbank opposite the Colt Building.

On the city side of the dike, opportunities for housing or office development are illustrated. The residential sites shown are on either vacant or underutilized land. Most of the parcels are in private ownership; city zoning and financial incentives could be used to encourage both medium-density and mixed-income development, maintaining the existing character of the neighborhood. The only site proposed for higher-density, long-term residential or office development is the present Northeast Utilities parking lot on Charter Oak Avenue. Assuming agreement by the landowner, its proximity both to





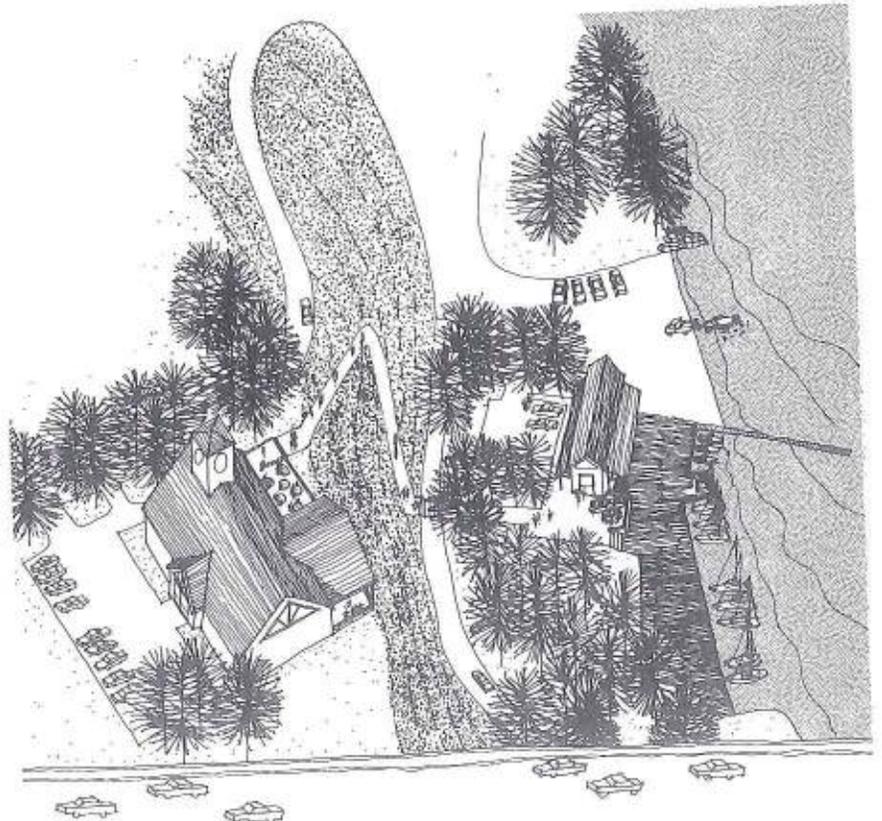
A small park north of the Colt plant can provide access beneath the highway to the riverfront.

downtown and to existing or proposed high-rise housing and office buildings could provide a market for a high-rise tower. In total, there is the potential for 300-400 new units in this area, 20 percent of which could be reserved for low- and moderate-income families.

As the community grows, it is important to ensure not only that new development match the low-density character of the neighborhood, but also that existing residents are not displaced and that existing housing is well maintained. As part of the Riverfront Recapture effort, the city should undertake a detailed stabilization plan for the neighborhood, including an expanded maintenance program for publicly assisted housing and rehabilitation incentives for privately owned units.

The Colt Armory building represents a resource for long-term reuse, which could help to support neighborhood stability and growth. Due to its complex ownership situation, continued loft manufacturing and office use is assumed for the next decade. In the future, however, its reuse could include loft housing development, a job training center, or a science and technology museum. Adjacent to the main buildings, the plan suggests removal or redevelopment of some of the older and less efficient low-rise manufacturing spaces. If Dillon Stadium were renovated, additional parking would be needed nearby; new spaces are illustrated.

Finally, the plan envisions landscaped roads between the Dutch Point/Colt Park neighborhood and new riverfront recreation development. Landscaping along major streets, including Charter Oak, Huyshope, and Van Dyke Avenues, will unify the riverfront with Colt Park and the Church of the Good Shepherd.



Adjacent to the Charter Oak Bridge, a new riverside restaurant can overlook a boat house and fishing pier.

South Meadows

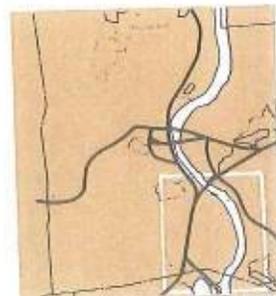
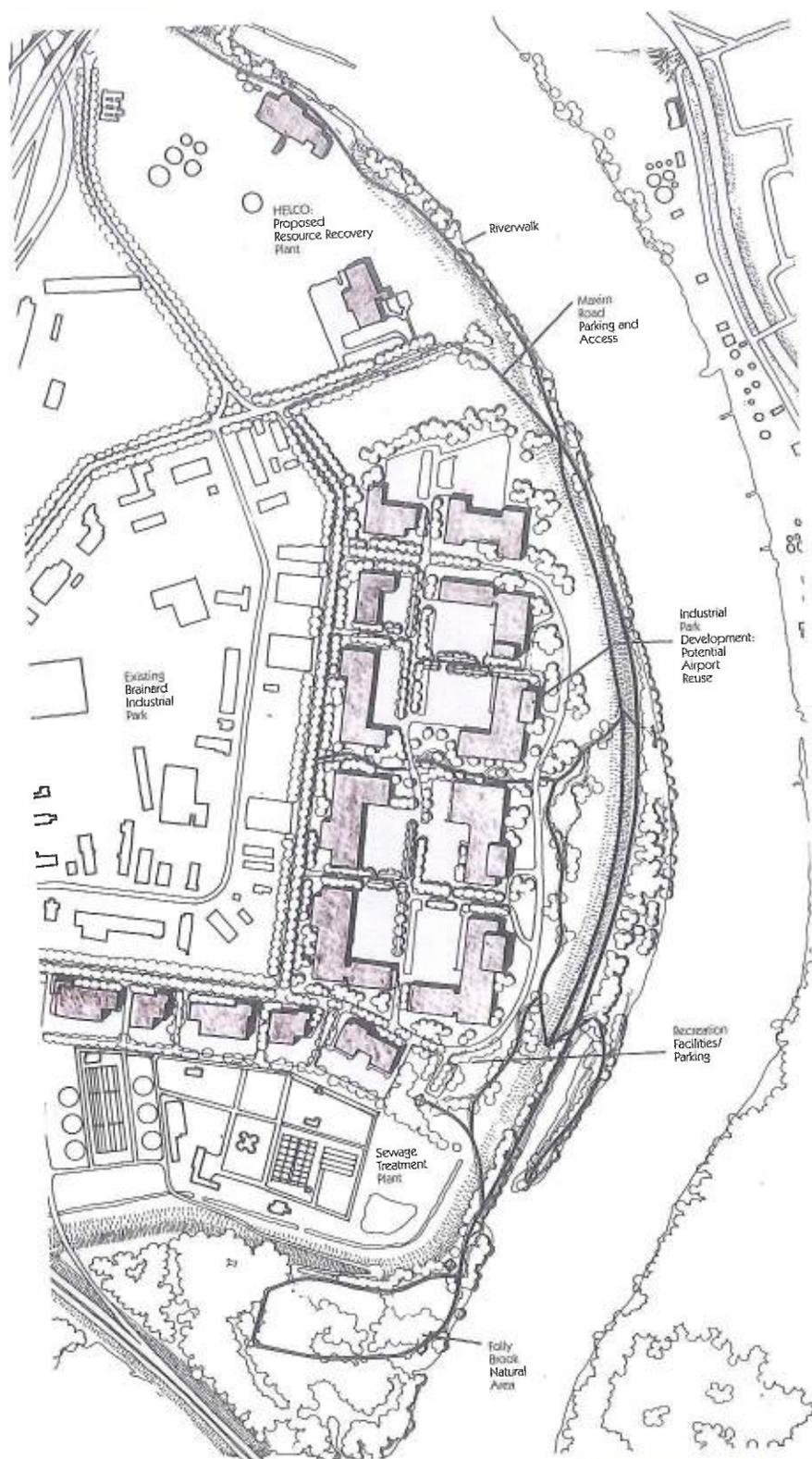
HARTFORD'S SOUTH MEADOWS AREA stretches from the Charter Oak Bridge to Wethersfield Cove and includes large parcels of land. The Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority will occupy the old HELCO plant. Brainard Field, a general aviation airport, comprises the largest existing tract.

Short-Term Development

The short-term proposal for Hartford's South Meadows is to extend the Riverwalk as an informal pathway to the Folly Brook Natural Area in the town of Wethersfield. The pathway system would end at Folly Brook with small sitting areas carefully designed to preserve the wetlands in their natural state. No buildings are proposed in this area. In later years wood boardwalks might penetrate the natural area to provide river and cove vantage points in a manner similar to those of the National Park Service at the Fire Island and Cape Cod national seashores. A small environmental education center could be developed as part of the wetlands preserve.

The initial construction of the pathway system would rely principally on clearing the underbrush along the river adjacent to Brainard Field and landscaping a pedestrian walkway. Important to this initial step is the integration of the Riverfront Plan with the construction of the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority (CRRA) facilities. Although the Riverwalk could bypass the CRRA site by an inland detour adjacent to Reserve Road, it is preferable that the walkway continue south from the Charter Oak Bridge along the river side of the plant to Brainard Field; it might include a visitors center for the new CRRA facilities. These choices need to be explored further.

To the south of the HELCO plant, Maxim Road would provide a major access to the Riverwalk system. This local street presently provides access to Brainard Field and extends directly to the dike. The development of parking facilities at the dike would enable residents to gain access to the river at this point. Further south, where Brainard Road ends at the sewage disposal plant, access to the dike system is possible. A small parking facility here could provide an additional connection to the Folly Brook Natural Area.



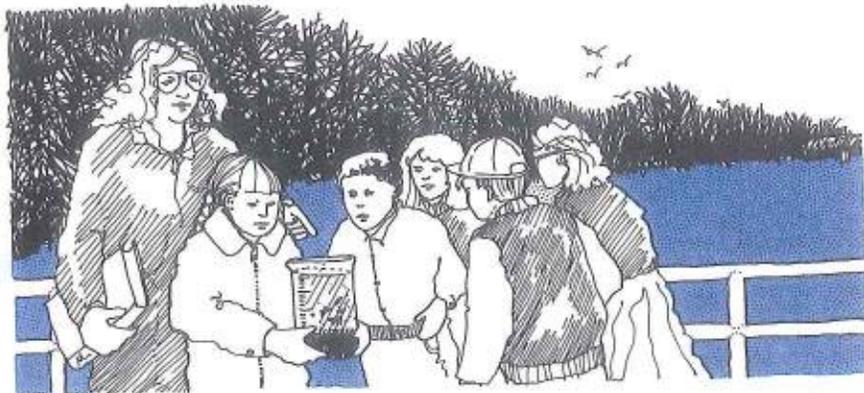
Long-Term Development

In the long term, the major potential change in the South Meadows involves Brainard Field. The field is one of the better equipped and busiest general aviation airports in Connecticut. However, the City of Hartford has studied the potential reuse of these 200 acres as an industrial park and in 1975 proposed a specific design for its reuse. The construction of the CRRRA facilities directly north of Brainard Field will add the potential of steam generation as a direct by-product to serve the needs of many industrial facilities in the Brainard Field area.

In addition, the city has pointed out that 85 percent of the planes at Brainard are registered to non-city residents; other nearby airports could handle some of this general aviation traffic. Brainard is not suited to commercial jet traffic and the adjacent dike and MDC facilities effectively prevent expansion.

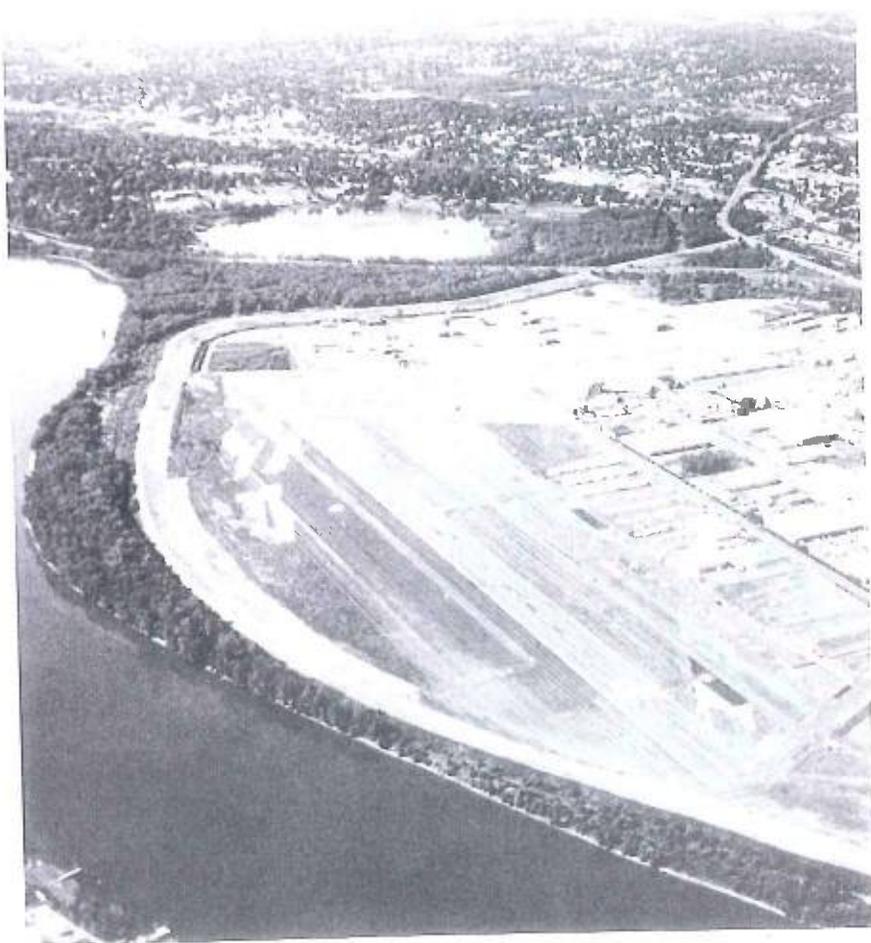
If Brainard is replaced by industry, some two million square feet of built space could be constructed at suburban industrial park standards. This could produce 2,800 jobs. The Recapture Plan shows an illustration of this industrial park option which would provide another road link to the Riverwalk just north of the MDC treatment plant. This service road would parallel the dike and provide access to sitting and picnic areas.

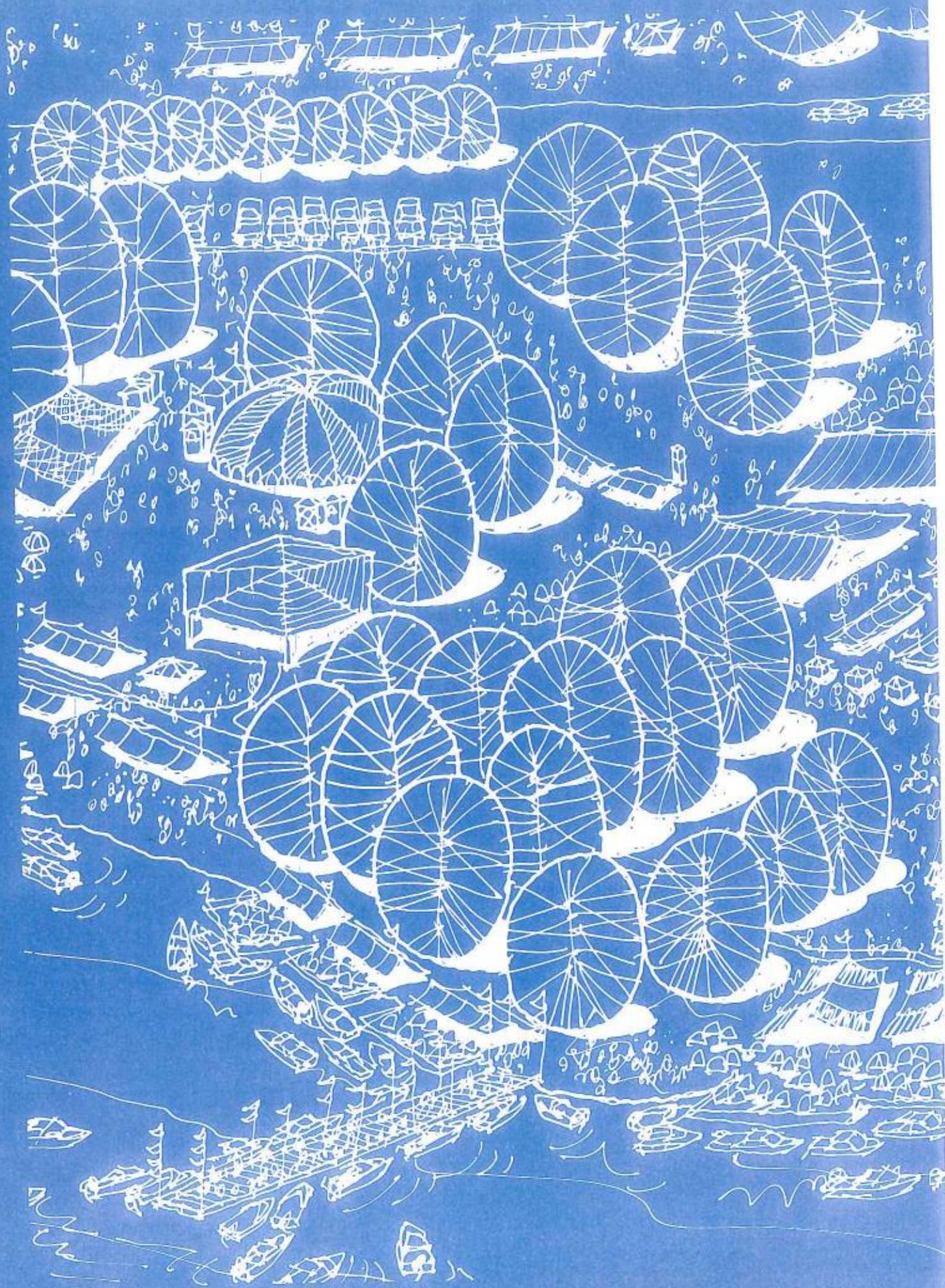
A decision about Brainard Field rests primarily with the State of Connecticut in collaboration with the City of Hartford. The Riverwalk can be developed under either option. If Brainard remains an airport, an added attraction of the Riverwalk would be the views of aircraft activity from the dike and the grassy area east of the main runway. The industrial park option would allow a new design to incorporate direct Riverwalk connections.



In the long term, an environmental education center could be established at the Riverwalk's southern terminus, the Folly Brook Natural Area in Wethersfield.

Brainard Field





RIVERFRONT ACTIVITY

An exciting variety of events and programs can attract residents and visitors to the riverfront throughout the year.

LAST FOURTH OF JULY, THE USUALLY forlorn East Hartford boat landing was crowded with people from morning till night. Across the river, the more accessible Riverside Park was little used until the evening fireworks. Why? Because in East Hartford a well-promoted schedule of events attracted hundreds of residents, while over in Hartford there were no planned activities.

Physical improvements alone are usually not enough to draw people. Successful developments are accompanied by interesting programs and events that attract large numbers of people to areas of new development again and again. When there are reasons to return to the riverfront, people will return.

Between now and 1986 an expanding series of events, festivals, and educational programs is proposed to "bring the people back." The Fourth of July and other recent celebrations have set a precedent for waterfront activity. New events could vary from neighborhood, ethnic and arts festivals to broadened educational, environmental and sporting programs aimed at making the riverfront a part of everyday life. Such an events program can also assure use of the design elements of the plan: the performance areas, nature trails, boat landings and sports fields.

Events and programs are also immediate, short-term activities that can establish the

tradition of riverfront life needed for longer-term redevelopment to occur. The Baltimore City Fair, for example, attracted hundreds of thousands of people to the waterfront years before Harborplace was developed. The enthusiasm this generated for the waterfront's potential was a major factor in Harborplace's immediate success.

As Hartford's Fourth of July organizers will attest, however, successful events don't just happen. They take great infusions of volunteer effort, creative thinking, and a lot of time and energy devoted to organization and management. Funding, of course, is important—but primarily as a catalyst to get things underway.

The recapture activity should include neighborhood residents, lunch crowds and shoppers, school groups, tourists, athletes, environmentalists, and Mom and Dad out with the kids on Sunday afternoon.

I LOVE MY RIVER

Dana Robinson
Grade 8, Fox Middle School
Third Prize: Junior High
Section

On the night of July 4th when they had the fireworks, I sat down on the riverside with my boyfriend and watched the pyrotechnics glitter in the sky and reflect over the water. The fireworks lit up the sky like a patch of firebugs on a cool summer night. After the exhibition of fireworks, we took a walk down the riverside. The night was cool but I was kept warm by my companion. Walking down the riverside of that romantic view I thought of beautiful things such as flowers, birds and the pretty butterflies that surround this image in my mind. Following our walk, we joined some friends and sat under a tree by the river and listened for music for a while. Then after that we walked some and we talked about our evening.

I will never forget that night. From that day I would remember the river.

I love my river; it holds special feelings for me. The river may seem troublesome for you, but I love the Connecticut River, that river of Romance.

Events

THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF the activity plan is the sponsorship of major riverfront events. For an event to attract attention and attendance, it must have an appealing and distinct theme. Riverfront Recapture events should be planned as a varied but coordinated year-round program with appeal for everyone in the region.

Three major theme events could be held each year. These would have to be established on a step-by-step basis, building on existing successful activities, and could be incorporated into the year-long 350th Anniversary celebration in 1986.

EVENT 1: The Riverfront Fourth of July

Continuing in 1983

The celebration of July 4th on the riverfront seems close to becoming a Hartford area tradition. It's a good example of the ability of the riverfront to serve as a common ground for residents of all ages and from all parts of the region.

Based on the success of the 1982 festival, which drew more than 50,000 people, the Recapture Plan proposes major participation by riverfront advocates in planning for the 1983 celebration. Most of the festival's activities took place in East Hartford and beneath Charter Oak Bridge. Use of other locations along the river, such as Riverside Park, can be expanded with additional events, perhaps including a riverfront carnival.

The Recapture Plan also proposes an expanded July 4th celebration as a major event in Hartford's year-long 350th Anniversary celebration in 1986.

EVENT 2: River Lore Festival

Starting in 1984

The river and its history offer a variety of themes for special events: sailing ships and crafts, early settlers, far-away ports, nature and wildlife. Cooperation from the Connecticut Historical Society, Mystic Seaport, and other water-related organizations could produce colorful events which can be educational as well as fun.

The River Lore Festival would take place on an early fall weekend. Food stalls, crafts workshops, educational displays, boat tours and arts activities would attract parents and children and river buffs. One suggested project is actually to build a traditional Connecticut riverboat. This project, using local crafts people and involving children, could begin at the River Lore Festival and continue throughout the school year. The project would bring together children, teachers, sponsoring civic clubs and rivercraft enthusiasts, and could be a visible symbol of community involvement in the Riverfront Recapture process.

OUR RIVER

Brandy Sears
Grade 2, Naylor School
First Prize: Primary Section

A beautiful river runs through our state, it is called the Connecticut River. It is very long. It is a lot like the Mississippi River. Our river is very clean, so it is a great place to fish. It is a good place to go for a boat ride, too. I love our river!

OUR RIVER

Francis Henry
Grade 2, Naylor School
Second Prize: Primary Section

The Connecticut River is a long, long river. It is eleven feet deep on the sides. Once I sailed down the river on a big, big boat. Another time I went to a boat race. I have also gone fishing there. I caught goldfish, catfish and bluefish. It's too bad some people never see our river.

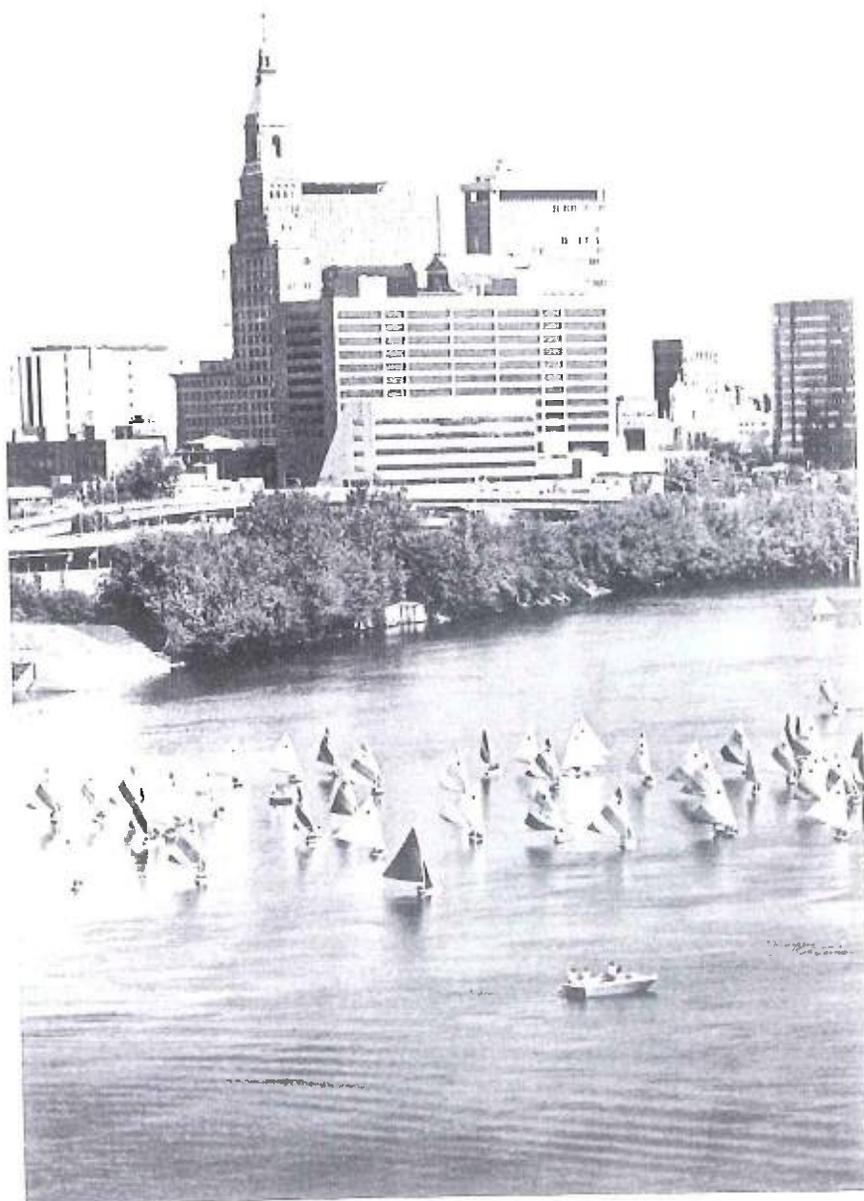


EVENT 3: The Riversports Festival and Triathlon

Starting in 1985

Many of the activities included in the Fourth of July celebrations have focused attention on the use of the river itself as a recreational amenity. Canoe and other boat races have been popular spectator events. A third major riverfront event, with "river sports" as its theme, is proposed for late Spring 1985. Fishing and boating competitions would be held on the river itself. Track and field events and bicycle races would be held along the Riverwalk and in Riverside Park.

The program would culminate in a 3.6-mile Triathlon in which contestants would run, bicycle and canoe from Riverside Park along the Riverwalk to the Charter Oak Bridge and across the river to the landing area. From there the race can proceed north to the Bulkeley Bridge and then across the river again back to Riverside Park. This event should attract contestants and spectators from the entire region. It can also celebrate the completion of the Riverwalk system within the central area: with the construction of the Bulkeley Bridge underpass, this will be the first time that a continuous riverfront race will be possible.



I LOVE MY RIVER CITY

Jason Stack
Grade 5, Webster School
First Prize: Intermediate
Section

At the age of 10 I've been many places: from the Thames in London to the Seine in Paris, to the Danube in Vienna, and finally to the good old Connecticut in Hartford.

I can just see Huck Stack walking down the Connecticut River fishing and canoeing.

Out of all the rivers I've seen — the best one is the one I love, the Connecticut River. Hartford, Connecticut is definitely a river city. Anyone who doesn't think so hasn't been outside Hartford, Connecticut.

The river area should be improved, I love it!

Hartford's 350th Anniversary

1986

BY 1986, THE SHORT-TERM RIVERFRONT projects will be complete. The recaptured riverfront will be the site of three major annual events and will have established itself as a location for Hartford's 350th birthday party: a common ground on which all residents can come together for a year-long program of events, programs and activities.

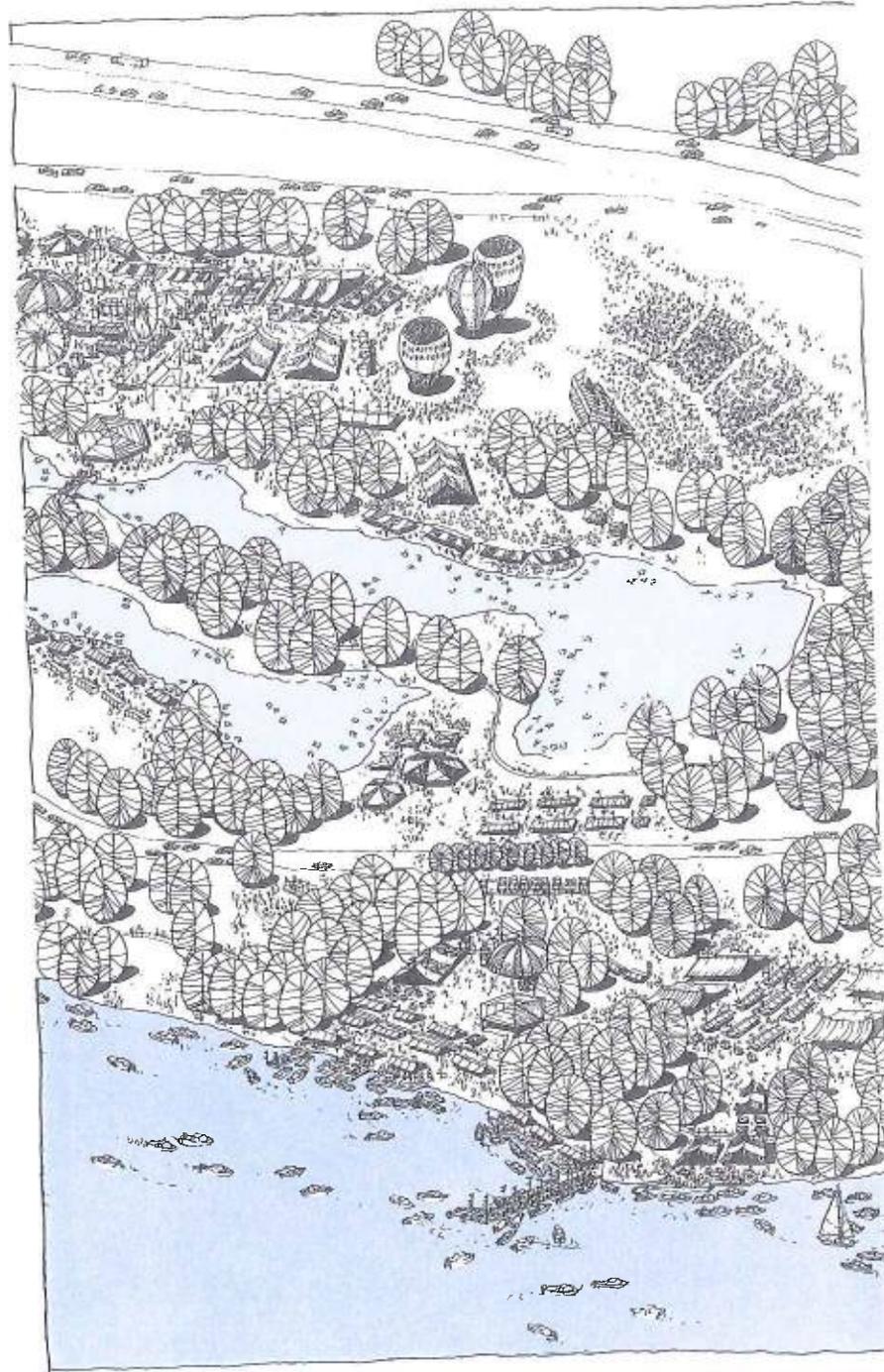
In addition to established events such as the Riversports Festival and Triathlon, 1986 provides the occasion for a wide variety of smaller events centered around neighborhood themes. The neighborhood ethnic fair is a common example of successful urban fairs. It is fun, exciting and profitable.

A series of such fairs is proposed throughout the year. Each would relate to a specific neighborhood of Hartford, but would take place on the riverfront so that all the region's residents can be encouraged to participate.

The big event of 1986, however, will be a super Fourth of July Festival. This annual celebration is already well established in the area, and it can be expanded by adding new programs and using new access links to the river and major new riverfront facilities.

One proposal is to involve the area's artistic talent in the planning and execution of Anniversary events. Artists can help people see the riverfront in new and different ways. Using the Fourth as a focus, it would be possible to draw upon all of Hartford's arts and cultural resources.

Both the visual and performing arts should be included. There should be something for everyone: jazz and symphonies, puppet shows and dramatic performances, spectator events and community dances. The riverfront itself would be transformed into a giant stage: permanent fixtures along the river — highway columns, bridges, light poles — could become props in a seemingly never-ending performance.



Riverside Park can be a primary location for 1986 300th Anniversary celebrations.



PHASING: THE NEXT FOUR YEARS AND BEYOND

It will take many years to recapture Greater Hartford's riverfront. The most important steps, however, are the first ones.

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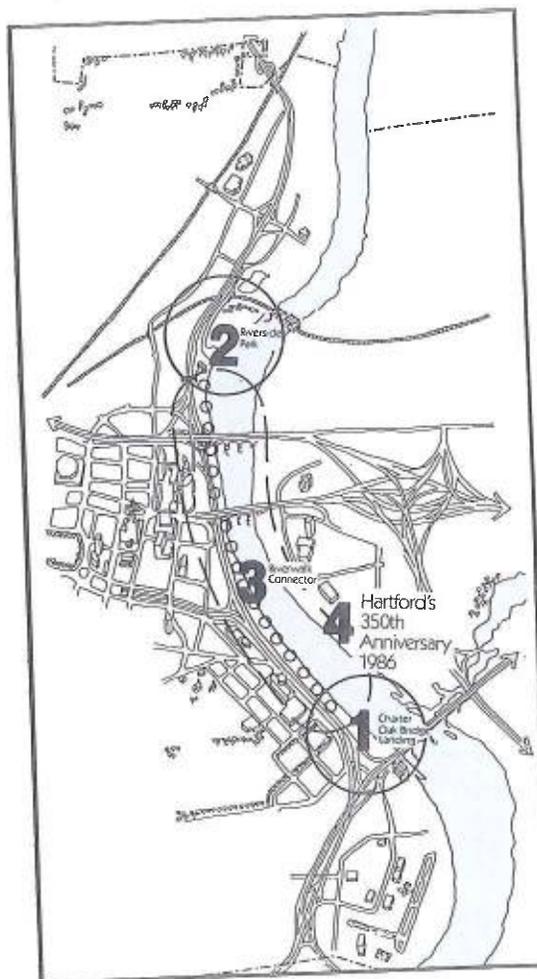
WO CRUCIAL STEPS ARE:

1. Rapid development of physical improvements and programs that can reestablish frequent and sustained use of the riverfront; and
2. Creation of a management vehicle to coordinate and direct efforts to implement the recapture plan.

In 1986, the City of Hartford will celebrate its 350th Anniversary. The history of the Hartford region is intimately tied to the Connecticut River; the towns of Windsor, Wethersfield, East Hartford, and Glastonbury, along with the City of Hartford, share this heritage. With that in mind, it is appropriate that the Anniversary celebration use the riverfront.

1986 has been selected as the target for completion of initial riverfront improvements. Specific projects have been selected with three goals in mind:

- they should be financially and technically feasible;
- they should be accompanied by a coordinated set of programs and events that make the riverfront a vital part of the everyday life of the region; and
- together they should create a framework within which the Recapture Plan can be implemented.



Although the initial projects proposed are not massive in scope, they demonstrate the impact of even modest improvements and establish the basis for the future development of the longer-term plan.

Four steps are proposed to achieve the 1986 target.

I LOVE MY RIVER

Teresa Ribeiro
Grade 12, Hartford High
First Prize: High School
Section

As I arrive at the muddy banks, I cast my eyes over the brownish-green water. The glimmer of the rippling waters as the blazing sun shines down upon it. Algae, fish, birds; all components of the River's ecosystem. I feel my senses come alive as I realize how spiritually gratifying the River is. Peace pervades the environment.

As I walk along the banks, I see images of another place and time. Back to the time before Western man came to this land. I see Indian women washing their clothing or gathering fish from the River as their children splash happily in the water. Indian men quietly moving among the trees in the surrounding forest. Coming back to the Here and Now, I realize that this one of the few places where there is no urbanization.

So natural, primitive, unborn. Left in peace and forgotten.

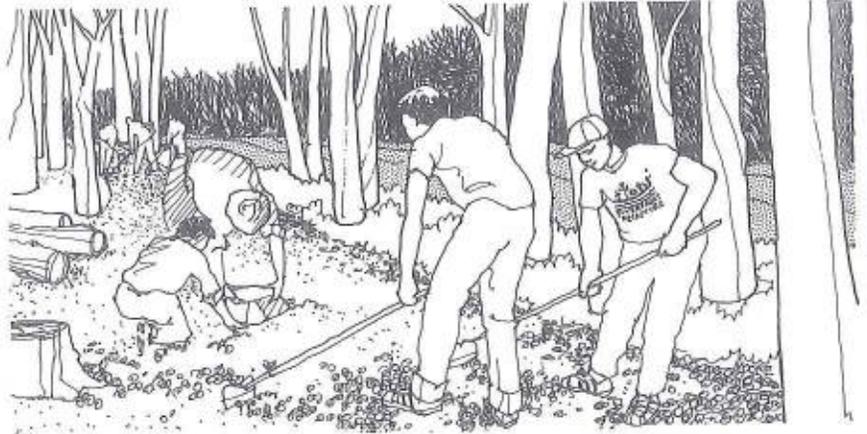
STEP 1

Consistent with the overall short-term goals, the most immediate projects focus on the most accessible and currently useful parts of the riverfront, the Charter Oak Bridge area and the East Hartford boat landing.

Initial Riverwalk Construction: While many area residents have been to Riverside Park, very few venture under the Charter Oak Bridge and walk north. The walk is pleasant, easy and offers excellent views of the river and the city behind the dike. To make this area accessible, it needs to be cleared. Installation of benches, signs and all-weather surfacing will make it attractive as well.

Charter Oak Bridge Area: On the Fourth of July, 1982, riverboats and Naval Reserve vessels provided boat tours from special temporary docks on the riverbank south of the Colt Factory. Many visitors wondered why the City of Hartford, once an important port, no longer had docking facilities for larger boats.

A permanent dock near the Charter Oak Bridge would include a cleared and landscaped area with piers parallel to the riverbank suitable for larger boats. The existing entry road over the dike should be extended south of the bridge to the dock. A paved parking area with a 50-car capacity could then be located atop the dike.



East Hartford Boat Landing: Although the boat landing is one of the more heavily used facilities along the river, its attractiveness is diminished by dust, heavy vegetation and a lack of furnishings. An all-weather paved and landscaped facility, featuring a new, permanent dock, would serve the needs of small boaters, fishermen and strollers. Benches, paving and lighting would invite lunchtime and weekend picnickers. A paved parking area would serve people who arrive by car and also accommodate boat trailers.

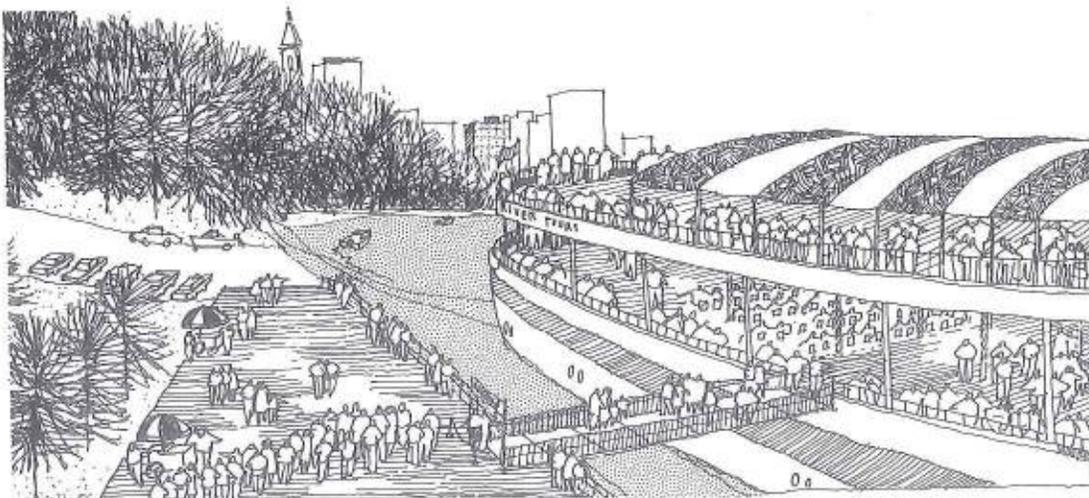
Events and Activities: Expanded July 4th celebrations are proposed, including boat tours, sporting events, fireworks, and food and drink concessions on the riverbank. With coordination between local boards of education and environmental groups, the river can be used as a learning laboratory throughout the year.

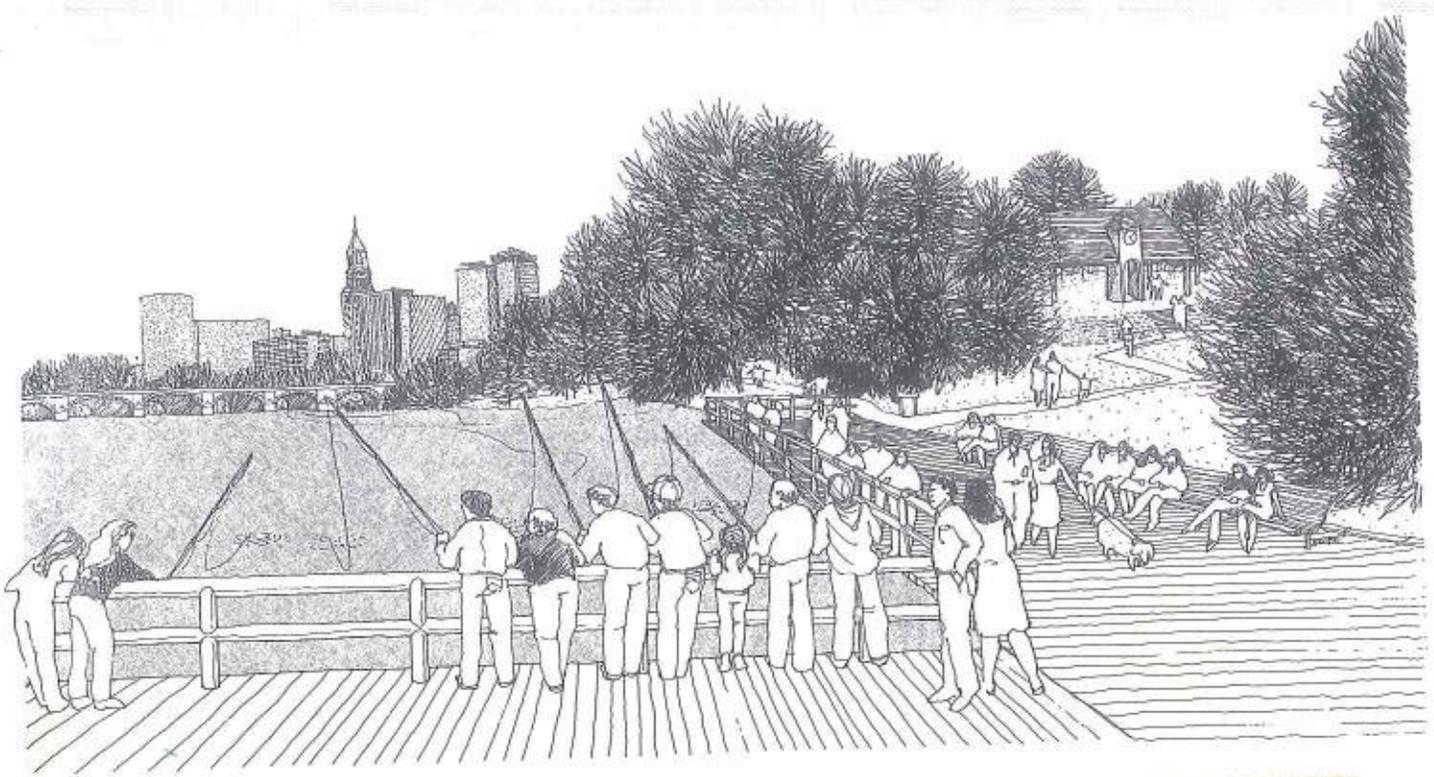
I LOVE MY RIVER!

Andre Ashley,
Grade 7, Classical School
First Prize, Junior High Section

I've been to a lot of rivers, but never a river like the Connecticut River. I fish in the river a lot. With my pole in the water, I lie back on the cool soil and just listen to the silence of the river. Sometimes when there is no work to do around the house and I'm bored, I take a trip down to the river just to think and throw stones in the water. Once I get to the Connecticut River I don't want to leave.

I caught a baby catfish once. I tried to keep him in a fish tank, but he was dying so I took him back in the river and let him go. I don't catch fish for the sport, I catch fish because I like to see them. I love my river. It's done me a favor so I'm just returning it.





STEP 2

Initial efforts having been concentrated in the south, the second step focuses on Riverside Park at the northern end of the central area.

Riverside Park: Long-term plans for Riverside Park development include restoration of the boating pond, a new activities building, and a variety of sports fields, docks, and picnic areas. To set the stage for this growth, initial developments include improving its access and broadening its appeal.

Walkways along the banks should be extended north through the park to the railroad bridge, with picnic areas and lookout points along the way. The existing heavy vegetation north of the launching area would be thinned substantially to open grassy meadows and provide clear views of the river. South of the boat launch, a paved path could connect the new pier to a new parking area, as well as extend south to the Bulkeley Bridge.

Signs and graphics would lead visitors through the park and along the Riverwalk. Explanatory displays describing the environment could be located along the way.

The majority of construction would be in the existing boat-launching area. A new fishing and boating pier is proposed, the first stage of a more extensive facility. In the vicinity of the existing pool house, an open-sided picnic shelter constructed as the first phase of a planned activities building could contain a restaurant and boat-rental concession.

West of I-91, a landscaped entry plaza and parking area would be built adjacent to the new footbridge location. This development might take place in concert with the initial planning for the two adjacent office or industrial sites.

Colt Park/Dutch Point Area: Development in Step 2 also includes the proposed construction of a small plaza south of the Northeast Utilities building, where access to the riverfront beneath the highway is possible. A walkway over the concrete dike will connect this entrance with the Charter Oak Bridge area to the south.

East Hartford Riverwalk: Across the river, the East Hartford riverbank should be cleared and landscaped, making it accessible from the Riverview Square development. Paths can then extend south of the Bulkeley Bridge to the newly improved boat-launching site. It would then be possible to walk from downtown Hartford via the Bulkeley Bridge sidewalk to East Hartford and south along the riverbank to the boat-landing area.

Events and Activities: Step 2 also calls for a further expansion of riverfront events and programs. In addition to the Fourth of July celebration, the first River Lore Festival, held in Riverside Park, would feature temporary amusement facilities, food and beverage concessions and information booths.

The continued expansion of the environmental education program could include an ongoing series of walking tours, studies and field explorations.

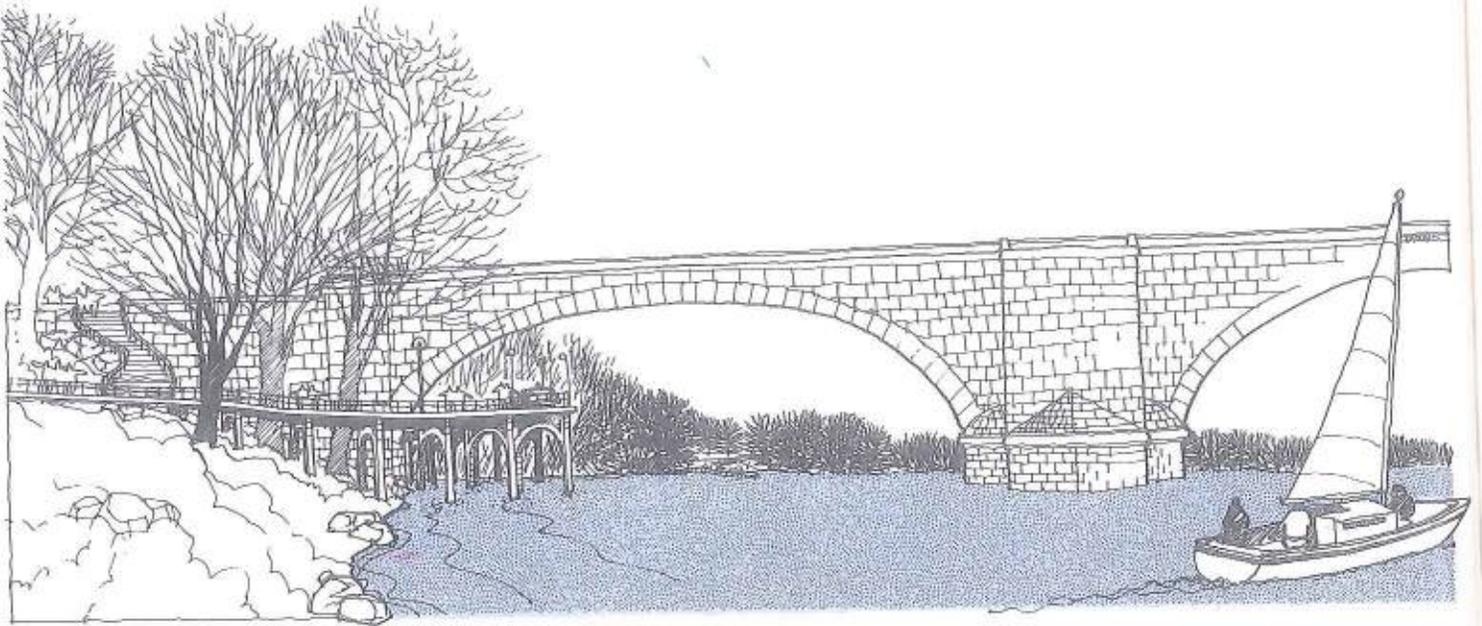
I LOVE MY RIVER

Paul Bollinger
Grade 8, Fox Middle School
Second Prize, Junior High
Section

The glossy, smooth surface on a cool, crisp spring morning, the ripples of happiness when a very much alive fish darts at a fly floating on the surface of the water.

This is a dream view of the Connecticut River that a lot of people have. There is no reason why this cannot be seen as an actual view of our state river by future generations. And, since we've definitely put a lot of our time into polluting the river, why are we so stubborn that we cannot put a lot of our time into cleaning it? This is how I describe the river in its present state: the glossy, smooth surface with patches of oil everywhere reflecting the colors of the rainbow—pretty death. The carcasses of dead, rotting fish bobbing on the waves, dotted with burger wrappers and soda cans.

The Connecticut River is ours, yours, everybody's. If you think you can sit back and say, "Let them take care of it, I haven't done anything wrong, I pay my taxes." You're wrong, dead wrong. Do you drive a car, motorcycle, moped? If you do, you've done something wrong. The exhaust from the engine in your vehicle destroys life all down the river and sets off a chain reaction that destroys the river itself. Yes, I love my river and I show my love by helping to clean back to life.



STEP 3

Steps 1 and 2 focus on short-term improvements at the north and south anchors of the Hartford Riverwalk. The third step concentrates on establishing the connection between Riverside Park in the north and the Charter Oak Bridge area in the south.

The Bulkeley Bridge Connector: The chief obstacle to completing this connection is the Bulkeley Bridge abutment which extends into the river, making passage beneath impossible. Overcoming this barrier—a crucial step in establishing the continuous Riverwalk—will require the construction of an elevated walkway around the abutment: a ten-foot-wide structure capable of carrying pedestrian, bicycle and emergency vehicle traffic, built to withstand flood waters and winter ice. Stairs from the existing Bulkeley Bridge sidewalk would then connect with the walkway below, providing a direct link between the riverwalks in Hartford and East Hartford as well as interim access from downtown.

Because the Bulkeley Bridge is state-owned, the possibility of some state funding for this improvement seems appropriate. Construction of this walkway will connect Hartford and East Hartford and Windsor and Wethersfield along the riverbanks, creating a truly regional open-space system.

Expanded Riverwalk Construction: Substantial improvements to the Riverwalk itself are also planned. Clearing and initial development of the Riverwalk between the Bulkeley and Charter Oak bridges are proposed in Step 1. In Step 3 these developments would be augmented, including paving, emergency vehicle access and lighting.

Events and Programs: Many of the activities included in the Fourth of July celebrations have centered on the river itself as a recreational amenity. Canoe and other boat races have been popular spectator sports. A third major riverfront event, with "riversports" as its theme, would feature fishing and boating competitions, track and field events, and bicycle races, and would culminate with a Triathlon, an event utilizing both banks of the river as well as the water itself. It would attract contestants and spectators from the entire region and celebrate the completion of the Riverwalk system.

WHY I LOVE MY RIVER

Kim Greene
Grade 5, King School
Third Prize: Intermediate
Section

I love my river because it doesn't send polluted air to our state. It may be dirty, but not polluted.

Sometimes, people are very inconsiderate and they throw trash into our river. This is what makes our river polluted.

Last week, about twenty people from my school went on an educational trip called "The Envirolab." On the bow (the front of the boat) we split up into three groups, and my group took the temperature of the water. On the stern (the back of the boat) we sent down a big yellow thing that picked up whatever was at the bottom of the river.

Back to why I love my river: I love my river because people can fish in it, and on the Fourth of July, we might have all kinds of boat races. At night, there are fireworks and other exciting things.

Please people. If you're not going to use the river for what it's meant for, then just leave it alone.

The final set of short-term improvements is planned to coincide with the 350th Anniversary of Hartford's founding. The events during the year-long celebration would be held on the river, using the facilities developed over the previous four years.

Downtown Walkway and Amphitheater: Still missing is the crucial connection between downtown Hartford and the river. An interim elevated walkway is proposed just north of the Hartford Steam Boiler building. This walkway will step up 12 feet from the elevation of Constitution Plaza in order to cross the existing I-91 southbound roadway. After crossing the highway it will descend to the dike and the riverbank below. If the highway is ultimately lowered, the structure of the interim walkway will support the planned plaza-level connection to the river. At the base of the overpass near the river's edge, a paved, stepped amphitheater could be the center of Anniversary events and would provide ample seating and space for other riverside outdoor performances. It would be accessible from three directions: from downtown via the highway overpass, from Riverside Park in the north, and from the Charter Oak Bridge area to the south.

Riverwalk Extensions: Extending the riverwalk to Windsor and to Wethersfield is also planned for 1986. Clearing a path to the

Loomis School in Windsor and to Wethersfield Cove south of Hartford will allow residents of the adjoining towns to benefit from the improvements in Hartford and East Hartford. These connections would create a regional system of paths, trails, and bikeways, making the riverfront accessible and attractive to a large population.

Charter Oak Riverside Restaurant: Beneath the Charter Oak Bridge along the top of the dike, a two-story riverside restaurant and concession is proposed, featuring a seafood bar on the first floor and a full-service restaurant on the second. Both floors of the building might include wide outdoor terraces, offering views of the river and the city. The facility could also include a modest visitors center offering information about the river and its history and plans for future development.

The Anniversary Celebration: The newly recaptured riverfront can provide a dramatic focus for Hartford's 350th Anniversary. The year-long celebration incorporating the three regularly scheduled events can make use of the new recreational facilities as sites for festivals, fairs, performances and concerts. These events would introduce thousands of visitors to the beauty of the riverfront and build a strong constituency for future use and improvement.

I LOVE MY RIVER

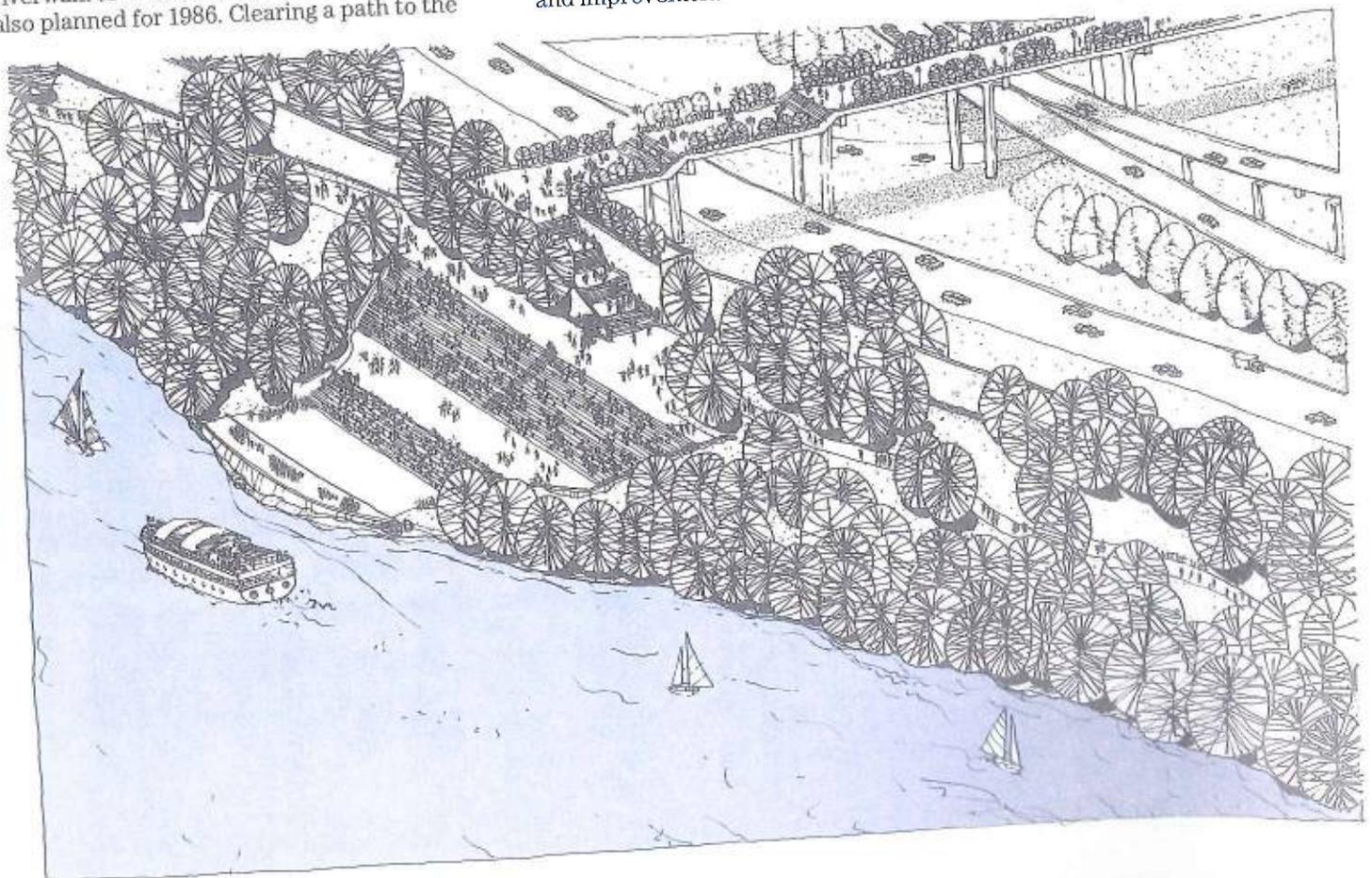
Barbara Maieli
Grade 3, Naylor School
Third Prize: Primary Section

Connecticut River begins in northern New Hampshire and crosses Connecticut before running into the ocean. The name "Connecticut" means "freshwater" in the Indian language. It is just beautiful to look at! Once in a while my parents and I will take a ride across the river because my beautiful Daddy likes to show me how great and wonderful nature is. Sometimes I feel sorry about the way the Connecticut River looks. You see, it's just a little bit dirty, and that's too bad!

Once there were Indians here who lived along the Connecticut River. At that time there were no cars or big buildings and factories to spoil the river water with waste products. The water was really clean and it was full of fish.

Indians and Pilgrims used to go to the river to wash their clothes, catch fish and go boating. On each side of the river there are trees, beautiful to see! In the early days, people used their wood to build houses and churches.

This was the way villages were made along the Connecticut River.



SUMMARY: SHORT-TERM PROJECTS 1983-1986

Total short-term costs
\$5,500,000-
\$6,500,000

STEP 1

Demonstration Projects
Clearing and construction of pathway
(Charter Oak to Founders Bridge)
Interim dock construction for riverboats at Charter
Oak Bridge
Pavement of road and parking area at riverboat
dock
Paving and landscaping of East Hartford boat-
launching site
July 4th Festival
Boat tours and riverboat fireworks rides
Riverfront booth, literature and handouts
Environmental Education Program

BUDGET

Demonstration Projects	\$530,000
Administration	200,000
Events Support	70,000
TOTAL	\$800,000

STEP 3

Construction of the Bulkeley Bridge Connector and
Stairs to Riverwalk
Paving of Central Riverwalk
July 4th Festival/River Lore Festival/Riversports
Festival and Triathlon
Riverwalk Tours/Environmental Education Program
Clearing of Riverwalk Extension to Windsor and
Wethersfield

BUDGET

Projects	\$1,140,000
Administration	350,000
Events Support	110,000
TOTAL	\$1,600,000

STEP 2

Initial Reconstruction of Riverside Park
Landscaping, Paving, Dock, Picnic Shelter
Graphics/Signage
Triangle Park Construction
Clearing and Grading East Hartford Pathway
(Bulkeley Bridge to Boat Launch)
River Lore Festival
Environmental Education Program
Development of Market Street Sites
Development Plan for Site North of the Retention
Pond

BUDGET

Projects	\$910,000
Administration	250,000
Events Support	90,000
TOTAL	\$1,250,000

STEP 4 1986

First Phase Downtown Riverwalk Connection
Amphitheater Construction
Restaurant/Visitors Center at Riverboat Landing
Extension of the Riverwalk to Loomis School and
Wethersfield Cove
350th Anniversary Celebration/River Lore Festival/
Riversports Festival and Triathlon
Riverwalk Tours/Environmental Education Programs

BUDGET

Projects	\$1,600,000
Administration	400,000
Events	200,000
TOTAL	\$2,200,000

Total Project Phasing and Costs

ACCORDING TO THE PLAN, THE BASIC Riverwalk structure will be in place by 1986. From then on, it will be expanded and improved with additional recreational development on the river side of the dike and with associated links to adjacent neighborhoods. Total costs of realizing the Riverwalk and associated recreational facilities are estimated at \$18-22,000,000. It is expected that these costs will be borne by a variety of funding sources over a 20-year period.

These figures do not include costs for commercial and residential development in the secondary area:

- The exact nature of such developments will evolve in response to market conditions.
- They will be built by private developers, rather than by state or local government.
- They will be planned and built as self-sustaining projects using private investment as basic equity (although public funding such as an Urban Development Action Grant or Industrial Development Authority bonds may be involved).

In all, these developments will represent a sizable investment. In comparison with other recent riverfront developments, however, they seem reasonable for the Hartford region. For instance:

- The Penn's Landing project in Philadelphia—a dockside museum, park, marina, and mixed-use development—is budgeted at \$35 million for the central portion alone.
- Indianapolis has just completed a "riverfront recapture" plan for its White River Park waterfront. This plan calls for establishment of a new zoo, cultural center, amusement park, and landscape development at an estimated public cost of more than \$100 million.

Rather than relying on comparisons with other recapture efforts, however, it is more instructive to weigh costs with respect to the substantial potential returns. The Hartford region will have achieved:

- A major urban regional park
- A new focus for outdoor events, festivals and educational programs
- And what may be most important, an incentive for the development of new jobs and housing in the unused or underutilized sites adjacent to the riverfront.

Finally, project costs must be analyzed with respect to sources of funds. The next section suggests a basic implementation strategy for both short- and long-term riverfront projects: a strategic use of industrial and corporate funds to leverage existing or potential governmental loans or assistance.

I LOVE MY RIVER

Dawn Fayette
Grade 12, Hartford High
Second Prize, High School
Section

The Connecticut River has been a valuable resource since colonial times. This resource, however, is quickly dwindling. Because the river is no longer essential to life in this technological era, it is being abused.

Recently, I took a short ride on Envirolab, an ecological research boat dedicated to the study of the Connecticut River. I saw oil slicks, abandoned buildings and garbage. Even the sound of the river was drowned out by a highway overpass.

Despite these annoyances, the scientists on Envirolab seemed to think the river was not a lost cause; in fact, it has improved greatly in the past several years. The murky, brown water of the river is not necessarily unproductive, as their tests have shown.

I love my river, too much to stand quiet while it is abused. I don't think the river should be exploited through use as a tourist attraction, as this would only lead to the river's plight. Support should be offered for clean-up projects, and on Envirolab. Only when the river is close to its natural state should it be continuously exposed to the public.

PROJECT PHASING

Initial
Technical
Studies—
Riverfront
Guide

Public
Communications
Process

Recapture
Plan

Short-Term
Projects

Hartford's
350th
Anniversary 1986

Organization

Long-Term Riverfront
Development
(15-20 Years)



IMPLEMENTATION

Good ideas and inspiring plans remain concepts and wishes if they can't be carried out. Without a comprehensive plan and the money, leadership, and formal mechanisms to implement it, recapture goals will be impossible to achieve.

Public/Private Partnership

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS ARE now collaborating in the development of cities, districts or single projects through a variety of formal joint-development institutions, aptly called partnerships. A recent survey of the urban revitalization scene for the National League of Cities noted: "No one group or agency acting alone has the influence or economic muscle to bring about the balance of interests and needs that is the hallmark of successful projects."

Joint development partnerships provide a medium for exchange of ideas and resources that can be organized in a number of ways. Whatever their organizational structure, however, they create a wide range of skills and resources at every stage of implementation: planning, financing, construction and marketing. Private-sector capacity is increased by the addition of legal powers and financial flexibility. Public-sector capacity is increased by specialized professional staff and the ability to make timely decisions.

The partnership responsible for implementing this Recapture Plan could evolve from existing organizations. If so, it could be created in phases that correspond to the proposed schedule and plan for riverfront improvements.

The dike system on both sides of the river divides the riverfront planning area into two distinct types of land. The land between the dike and the river—the primary area—is flood-prone and cannot be extensively developed. The proposed uses for this land are recreational—the Riverwalk and related facilities—with commercial development limited to food and recreational concessions. Most of this land is owned by local government. Nearly all of the improvements scheduled for the first step of implementation, 1983 through 1986, are located in the primary area.

The balance of the planning area, the secondary area, is on the city side of the dike. This is the land on which income-producing property can be developed. Land ownership is mixed—some public, some private. A large portion of this land is either built upon or not available for development for many years. However, over the next 20 years or so, portions of this secondary area could be purchased and developed by a partnership charged with managing riverfront development.

The balance of this section describes a suggested way to manage and pay for the proposed plan of riverfront improvements, recognizing that other options are available.

Role of Riverfront Recapture, Inc.

THE PREPERATION OF THE MASTER plan is sponsored by Riverfront Recapture, Inc., a not-for-profit, non-stock company. RRI is funded by local businesses and led by a Board of Directors composed of civic leaders, public officials, professionals and corporate executives.

To realize some of the proposals presented in the Recapture Plan, the public and private sectors must cooperate in the formation of a development program and process. Once the plan is adopted by local planning bodies and by regional and state agencies, public/private collaboration should be prepared to implement the plan's various components.

Among the options available for implementation would be the reorganization of RRI with the objective of increasing fund-raising and management capabilities. In this manner RRI could manage improvements and plan and conduct events between 1983-1986.

For RRI to be successful during this early phase of work, however five major prerequisites would have to be met:

1. RRI should not seek to become a park administrator. Early riverfront improvements should occur only if there is a public-sector organization or agency committed to taking over responsibility for the maintenance and operation of new development and other recreational improvements.
2. The Riverwalk and other recreational improvements should be included in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and could be designated as a state park. These actions would allow access to state and federal funding.
3. Formal adoption of the recapture concept should be approved by adjacent towns: not only Hartford and East Hartford, but also Windsor and Wethersfield. The participation of more towns in the recapture effort would make designation as a state park easier. This broadened support could also make available the financial and management expertise of existing regional authorities and commissions.
4. RRI should not become a real estate developer. By 1986, however, some entity that is capable of creating or facilitating private development to specifically benefit the riverfront cause must be in place. After 1986, opportunities to develop real estate in the secondary area could materialize.
5. Future highway improvements are the key to creating development potential for the North Meadows and downtown areas. RRI, in cooperation with city officials and the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce, should support approval of the highway plans most beneficial to riverfront recapture efforts.



THE RIVERFRONT WILL BE FREE

Hartford Courant, September 24, 1982

Restoring the city's historic connection to the river is a long-term goal, which will benefit all of the people of Hartford. The city's poorest residents years ago often derived the greatest benefit from the Connecticut River. The river was their swimming pool, fishing spot, and reflection pond. The riverbanks were a pleasant and free place to while away an afternoon...

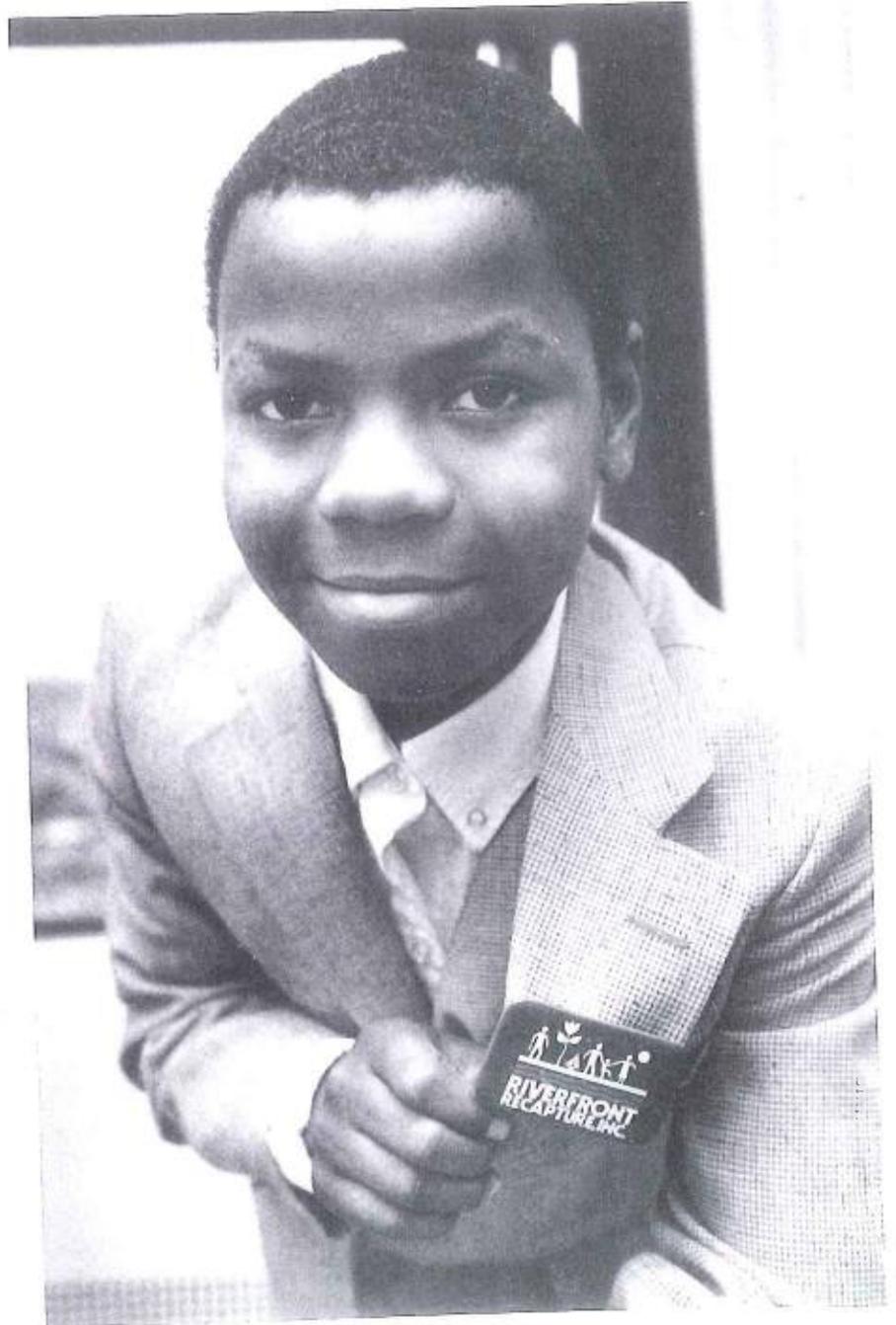
Friends of the River

FOR A GENERATION OR SO, CITIZENS, businesses and foundations will have to provide an important portion of the financial support for the riverfront recapture effort. This support is vital during the first two to four years of implementation. It will take that long to secure and begin spending government grants, obtain decisions on possible revisions to state laws, set up the implementation vehicle, resolve the land use and access issues, and begin detailed planning for public and private real-estate development.

The budgets of the state and of Hartford area towns cannot accommodate large new demands. Continued citizen and business support of the project, however, will send a clear signal to state and local officials that recapturing the riverfront is a high priority on the civic agenda. Creating a new foundation, perhaps called "Friends of the River," would help maximize private investment. This foundation could have its own fund-raising activities and provide a voluntary mechanism for area residents to support the Recapture Plan.

Many groups in the Hartford region are trying to raise funds. Some are struggling to fill gaps created by withdrawn federal funds. Others want to create new programs to serve various groups or area needs.

On the other hand, individual contributions in the Hartford area are increasing despite the current economic recession. With a broadly supported plan and an aggressive campaign, Friends of the River could capture a reasonable share of private contributions. The plan for short-term improvements suggests a total cost of approximately \$6 million. In a public/private partnership it would seem reasonable to assume a private contributions goal of at least \$2 million. Of this, perhaps \$400,000 could be raised from individual contributions in a four-year period. About \$1,600,000 would then remain to be solicited from the corporate community and existing foundations.



Riverfront Development Corporation

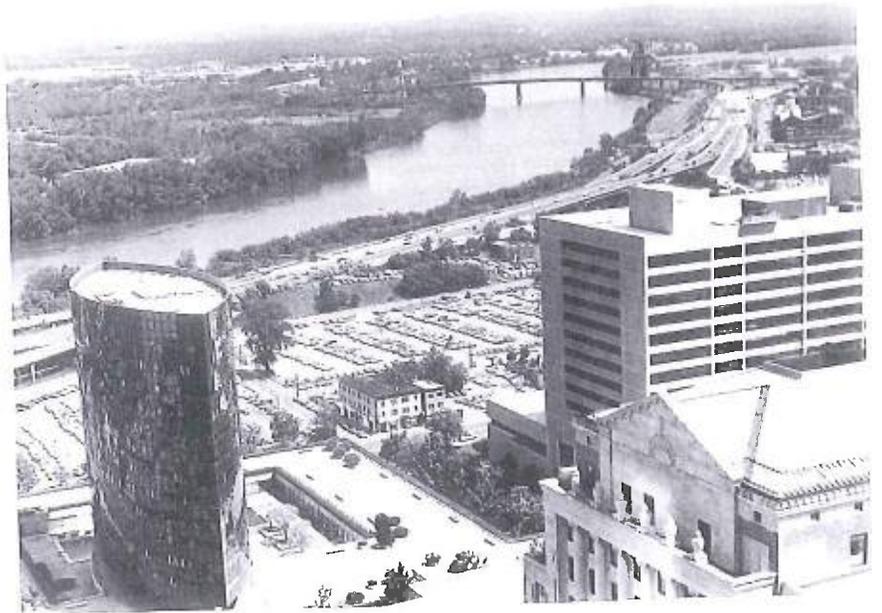
BY 1986, THE ADDITION OF RIVER-front amenities together with the proposed highway improvements in the late 1980s should create attractive development sites and an opportunity to provide jobs, housing and new tax revenues.

The secondary area contains hundreds of potentially marketable acres. A way needs to be devised, however, to manage its development and at the same time help pay for continuing investment in the primary area.

If Hartford area residents and government invest in the riverfront, they should get a return on their investment. To channel returns from development back to the riverfront, however, an entrepreneurial riverfront management and development entity will probably be needed.

Connecticut's Urban Development Law authorizes non-profit development corporations, with the approval of the city, to undertake municipal development projects. Once the city has approved the project plan, the development corporation can implement it. And these non-profit development corporations are eligible for all state economic assistance programs—bonds, grants, and job incentives.

In addition, it is expected that RRI will help to achieve early Phase Two projects and will help create the Riverfront Development Corporation.



Planning Workshop, September 18, 1982



Public Support and Financing

THIS RECAPTURE PLAN IS INTENDED to engage Hartford area residents in visualizing the possibilities for the Connecticut riverfront. Before the shared vision of the hundreds of people who helped create the plan can begin to be realized, the plan itself must be formally adopted as the policy of the communities it might affect.

Local Government

The public sector—both cities and towns—must be involved in implementing the plan. The first step toward this is for the plan to be adopted by the Hartford Commission on the City Plan as part of Hartford's city-wide master plan. Because the riverfront plan also affects East Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield, formal action of the planning and zoning commissions of these towns is also being sought.

A second step toward local public-sector support could be the development of in-kind services whereby supervisory personnel would direct an initial riverbank clearance project involving local youth in a program similar to a civilian conservation corps. The private-sector, in turn, could provide financial support.

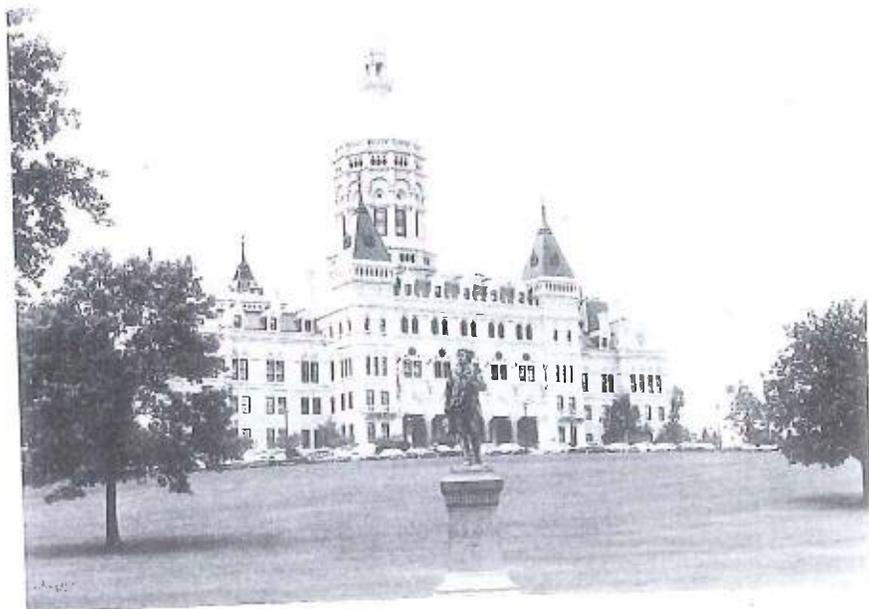
State Government

Once private sector seed money is obtained in 1983 and 1984, additional funding will be required from the public sector. It is recommended that this effort focus first on the state level in terms of park development (Department of Environmental Protection) and economic development (Department of Economic Development). In some cases, state funds are contingent upon local matching funds or services. This local financing should be modest and contingent upon a larger and more direct state effort; it could include donation of land.

Once a state or state/local effort is in place the possibility of leveraging future federal funds will be more realistic. Government's posture concerning its role in community development efforts may change. If this happens, municipalities that are prepared with a plan, a program, and state/local matching funds are the ones most likely to benefit.

The focus of the public effort in 1983 should be the Department of Environmental Protection and the State Legislature. Connecticut does not now have the equivalent of either a Massachusetts heritage park or a New York State urban cultural park. As indicated, the riverfront could be a prime candidate for a Connecticut park that would serve the entire Hartford region with connections via Keney, Riverside and Colt Parks to urban and minority neighborhoods.

As riverfront development gets underway a second state agency should also become involved. The State Department of Economic Development and its financing arm, the Connecticut Development Authority, are nationally regarded as bold and entrepreneurial. The experienced staff is fully capable of blending various programs, including Federal Economic Development Administration funds, to get feasible projects off the ground. The department has a thorough project approval process, and can provide funds for planning commercial and industrial projects.



Design and Marketing Guidelines

THROUGHOUT THE RIVERFRONT study effort particular concern was raised by both public agencies and city residents with regard to marketing problems in the North and South Meadows. This concern is particularly acute in the North Meadows, where considerable acreage still lies vacant because of a lack of local access, poor market image, and no apparent consistency in design. The lack of access is now being corrected by the construction of the Market/Weston Street connector, the widening of I-91, and the Jennings Road interchange. Two additional efforts are needed to help ensure the proper development of this area. These are design guidelines for future individual parks and a sophisticated marketing effort to ensure the identification of quality developers. Accordingly, these two pages list some preliminary ideas for the type of design criteria and marketing strategies that could be developed.

Design Guidelines

The development of the six action areas described in this plan will be partially controlled by the site plan and subdivision review power of Hartford and East Hartford. The design guidelines imposed by these bodies can significantly affect the quality of this future development.

Design criteria for future industrial and office park development near the riverfront should be employed to supplement existing zoning and urban renewal controls. They should include requirements to provide access to the riverfront at regular intervals. Small public parking areas should be provided near each access point.

High-quality, attractive developments result when uniform standards for landscaping, parking layout, signage, lighting and fencing are applied. These will prevent a hodgepodge of random or conflicting design elements. Typically, industrial parks are most attractive when a single developer enforces a consistent set of design standards; however, special requirements for site plan approval can be enacted to assure high standards. It will be incumbent upon the municipalities along the river to develop and enforce the necessary guidelines.

I LOVE MY RIVER

Kayden Will
Grade 6, Webster School
Second Prize; Intermediate Section

Having been to the Connecticut River I know what a great place it is to spend a day. For instance you can pretend you are a great explorer discovering the river and its surroundings for the first time. You can look for signs of floods or animals on the floodplains, or just take a nice peaceful walk along the river. On September 30, 1982, my 6th Grade class at Noah Webster School went on a trip to the river. It was the first time I ever really spent time next to and on the Connecticut River. We went on a boat called Enviro-Lab and took water and river bed samples. We took walks on the floodplain. I learned how to survey land—in other words, our day at the riverside was something I'll remember all of my life. Many times I have seen streams being put underground and ruined, and then I saw the Connecticut River in all of its autumn splendor and beauty and I began to wonder what kind of person could put such a work of art underground. I wish that more people would visit the Connecticut River and find out how nice it is to feel as if your mind is floating along with the current and off to places you have never seen before.



Marketing

The successful attraction of private development to land adjacent to the riverfront will require the application of modern real-estate marketing techniques. Portions of the Hartford riverfront have long been bypassed by developers. Access has been poor and the development which has taken place in recent years does not compare favorably with well-designed suburban projects in the Hartford region. In short, the riverfront area has a weak image as a real-estate location. Marketing, a good plan, and the will to carry it out can overcome image problems.

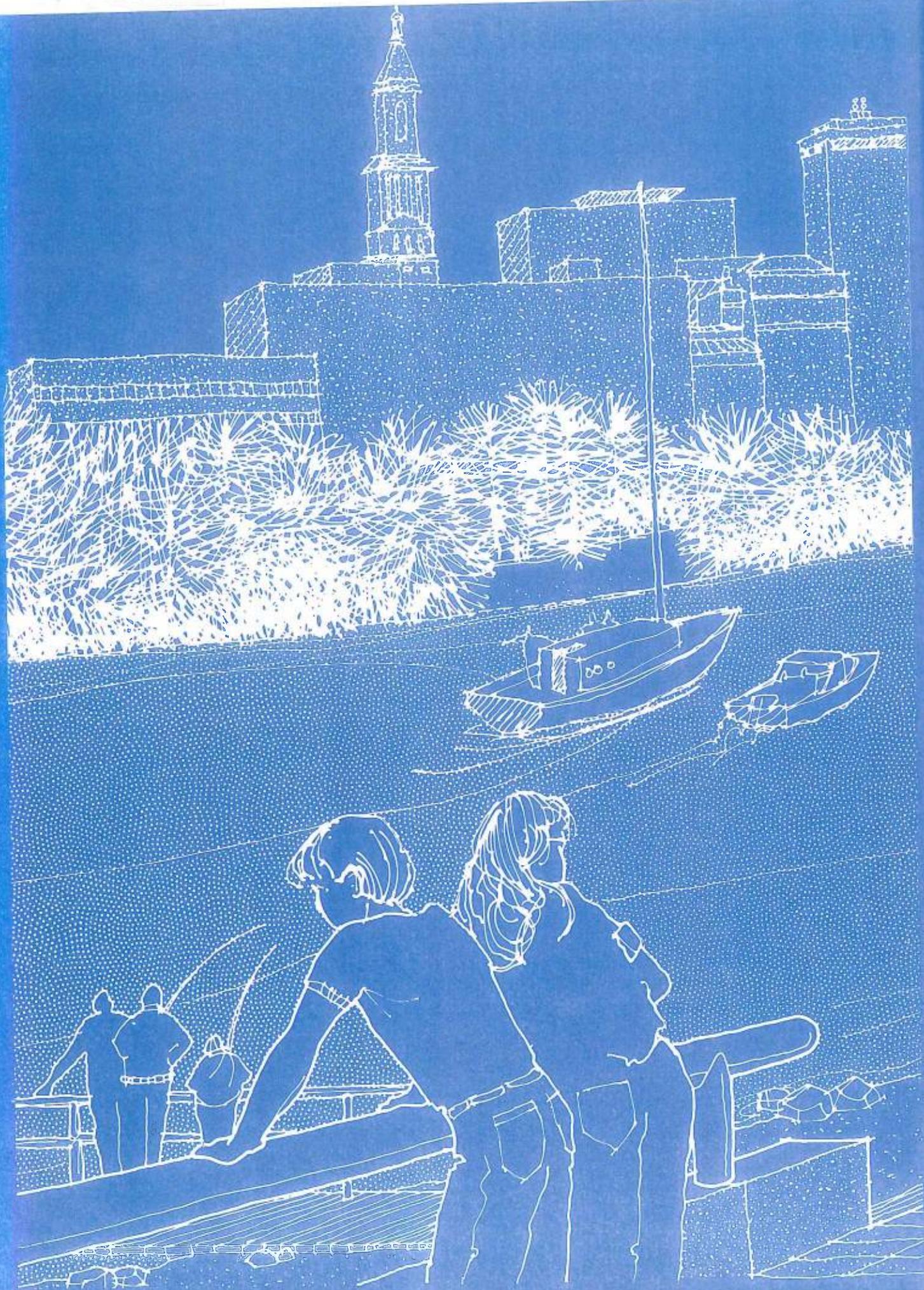
Marketing riverfront area locations essentially involves aggressively promoting the riverfront as a good place to build offices, factories, warehouses and housing. The locational advantages of land near the river must be clearly communicated.

Riverfront area sites will compete with established alternative locations in the Hartford region: Farmington, Middletown, Windsor, and Rocky Hill. For the riverfront to capture a fair share of regional growth, the attributes of the location—access, amenity, and labor force—must be convincingly presented, first to developers and secondly to prospective business and residential tenants. Marketing must create demand for the location.

The marketing strategy should involve specific promotional activities aimed at specific audiences. The Technical Report prepared for Riverfront Recapture, Inc. identified a range of potential industrial and commercial uses that might suit a riverfront location. These broad market potentials need to be refined to identify audiences for the marketing efforts.

Promotional activities to stimulate interest in the riverfront as a location for commercial and industrial development must complement efforts to promote the riverfront as a recreational resource. The first two years should include the preparation of a marketing strategy for private development. This strategy can be put into action during the next two years. Then, four years or more into the plan implementation, when private development sites become available, effective riverfront marketing will have development projects standing ready to begin flow of economic benefits from the riverfront into the community.





BENEFITS FROM THE RIVERFRONT

The preservation of the riverfront for open-space uses and the development of immediately adjacent lands can be of tremendous benefit to the people of the Hartford region.

IF PROJECTS IN THE SECONDARY ZONE of the riverfront study area are developed within allowable zoning categories, nearly 4.5 million square feet of industrial and office space can be developed. Between seven and eleven million dollars of tax revenue could be gained, and between 8,000 and 11,000 jobs could be created (the upper range of these figures depend upon the development of Brainard Field).

In neighborhoods adjacent to the riverfront, some 1,200 to 1,500 housing units could also be developed. This housing could signifi-

cantly reinforce the residential strength and character of existing neighborhoods such as Clay-Arsenal and Dutch Point, and can create new residential enclaves in downtown and East Hartford.

In addition to direct tax and job benefits, there are also secondary economic benefits from river-related activities. The proposed River Center with its adjacent amphitheater and boat docks can provide a magnet for visitors from the region as well as conventioners or other tourists visiting Hartford.

Riverfront Area	Potential Sq. Footage	Potential Taxes	Potential Jobs
North Meadows	840,000	\$ 1,700,000	2,000
Downtown	1,500,000	\$ 4,775,000	6,000
Dutch Point/Colt Park	350,000	\$ 650,000	600
South Meadows/Brainard Field	2,000,000	\$ 3,900,000	2,800
Total Potential	4,690,000	\$11,025,000	11,400

Recreation

WATER DRAWS PEOPLE. ACROSS THE nation, water-oriented parks are great attractions. For example, Liberty State Park on Upper New York Bay in Jersey City has become New Jersey's most popular park since opening in the mid-1970s. This success has even prompted state officials to consider a riverwalk to extend northward from the park to the George Washington Bridge.

Developers and restaurateurs believe that "water is magic." In the last decade, dozens of residential and commercial projects have been sited to take advantage of water views. Some of the most successful, such as Harborplace in Baltimore, have become tourist destinations in their own right. The result is a happy union of commerce, water, and urban revitalization.

The new park and related facilities could become a recreation resource for all residents of the region, as well as an attraction for tourists. The proposed amphitheater, boat dock, restaurants, and recreation and educational facilities would provide a major new attraction and add a pleasurable dimension to a visitor's stay in the Hartford area.



Housing

THREE HOUSING POLICY GOALS ARE suggested for the riverfront area:

1. Preserve and upgrade existing public housing
2. Maintain the present housing stock
3. Provide for mixed-income housing, including units for low- and moderate-income households

These goals reflect the desires of community residents, and are shared by RRI, which recognizes that while the development of the riverfront can add to the attractiveness of existing neighborhoods, the needs of the residents should receive first priority in terms of maintaining their existing homes.

Riverfront development could also add to the marketability of new housing development. If left to market forces alone, such development may tend to have relatively high sales values or rent levels. It is suggested that in the neighborhoods adjacent to the riverfront the housing goal should be to provide mixed-income developments that will produce residential units open to all income ranges, not just those affordable to the highest-income group. Specifically, it is recommended that 20 percent of all market-rate development be reserved for low- and moderate-income people. This could be accomplished by giving private developers density bonuses, access to the tax-exempt bond market, or initial tax write-downs. Housing projections are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 HOUSING PROJECTIONS

Area	Units	Low and Moderate Income
Clay-Arsenal	200	200
Dutch Point/Colt Park	400	80
Riverview (Downtown)	600	120
TOTAL	1,200	400

Jobs

THE PROPOSED RIVERFRONT PLAN projects the potential for 8,000 to 11,000 jobs within the riverfront study area. These projections are estimated over a 20-year development period and are based on the creation of nearly 4.5 million square feet of industrial and office space, or an average of more than 200,000 square feet of building per year.

A major goal for this job creation effort is to provide employment for existing residents of the city and adjacent towns, particularly those presently unemployed.

On the average, the skilled job categories (managerial, professional, technical, sales) represent about one-third of the work force. The moderately skilled (production, clerical) represent over one-half of the work force, while the unskilled represent the balance. Table 1 shows an anticipated mix of the skill levels for the new jobs near the riverfront.

Interviews with various companies produced estimates of the numbers of Hartford residents in a variety of occupational categories. Based on these interviews, Table 2 shows how many new jobs might be expected to go to Hartford residents.

It should be noted that the 8,000 new jobs equal one-third of the Hartford Labor Market Area's historical unemployment level, whereas the 3,000 jobs to Hartford residents equal 60 percent of current unemployment in Hartford.

TABLE 1 TYPES OF JOBS CREATED

Type of Job	Percent of Total	Number of Jobs
Skilled	30%	2,400- 3,300
Moderately Skilled	50%	4,000- 5,500
Unskilled	20%	1,600- 2,200
TOTAL	100%	8,000-11,000

TABLE 2 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF NEW JOBS

Type of Job	Number of Jobs	Percent of Jobs to Hartford Residents	Number of Jobs to Hartford Residents
Skilled	2,400- 3,300	25%	600-825
Moderately Skilled	4,000- 5,500	40%	1,600-2,200
Unskilled	1,600- 2,200	55%	880-1,210
TOTAL	8,000-11,000	39%	3,080-4,235



Summary of Benefits

IN SUMMARY, THIS RECAPTURE PLAN should produce significant benefits to the people of the Hartford region. Many of the job, housing and tax-income benefits are long term and require the cooperation of many agencies and political jurisdictions. Experience in other cities has shown that when realistic plans are developed the chances for state and federal support are excellent. This plan is a first step. In the next four years, it can produce immediate recreation opportunities along the river. To get started, the development of these opportunities will rely heavily on private funding from interested citizens and businesses. We hope you will help.



FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Hartford Courant
Editorial, November 27, 1982

The pleasures of Hartford's riverfront were once free.

But planners for the private Riverfront Recapture, Inc. now estimate that it will cost more than \$20 million to overcome the obstacles created over several decades and restore the river's enjoyment and utility.

Some of the improvements could start now, regardless of the development plan. Riverside Park, part of the network of city parks dedicated at the turn of the century, can be reclaimed without lavish expenditures, if police and park officials make a concerted effort to return the park to public use. The park in recent years has been used mainly as a trysting spot.

Revamping the downtown highway interchanges is also crucial to the riverfront plan. Construction of the elevated I-91 severed Hartford from the riverfront. The reconstruction, planned for the next decade, must not compound the error. The highway should be lowered, and certainly no new barriers should be allowed to separate downtown and the river.

Development of the riverfront gives direction to downtown renewal. Real estate investors already have recognized the river's worth, in the new office towers under construction overlooking the Connecticut.

But the river should be more than a sight for office workers. The river is a public recre-

ational resource that, developed, will restore a bit of leisure and historic flavor; and enliven the city.

The early phases of the project—including creation of footpaths and a dock along the river—are proposed for completion in 1986, the city's 350th birthday. Construction of a pedestrian bridge over the highway to the river would take place during a later phase, if federal and state funding is obtained.

Residents are in no position to pay for \$20 million in improvements, as City Council members observed after details of the riverfront plan were unveiled.

Spending money on riverfront restoration may be considered unrealistic, when property tax bills already are high, streets need repair and schools require greater attention.

But everyone in the city has an interest in seeing that downtown extends beyond the Civic Center and office towers, especially the residents who will get the most enjoyment from the riverfront, on foot. Improvements could be supported by bond issues and corporate contributions, as well as federal, state, and some local funds.

Hartford's people and businesses should be willing to make the investment, as well as seek outside support, to restore this resource for the next generation.

Become a Friend of the River

If you agree with our goal of recapturing the riverfront, if you want to make our neighborhoods nicer places in which to live, if you want to help accomplish some of the projects described, and if you think that the benefits are worth the effort, then join us!

The first step is to send in the card on the right. This expression of enthusiasm and support will cement the bonds of friendship. As a Friend of the River, you will receive:

- A Riverfront Recapture button
- A large blow-up of the Recapture Plan, with a summary description
- A subscription to *The River Current*, Riverfront Recapture's periodic newspaper
- A lot of new friends

I Want to Become A FRIEND OF THE RIVER

Enclosed is my first-year membership application. I want to help recapture the riverfront and this is what I can do:

I belong to the following organizations and this is what they can do to help:

Fill out and mail to:
Friends of the River,
 C/O Riverfront Recapture, Inc.
 10 Prospect Street, Hartford, CT.
 Please use extra sheets if you have more to tell us about our plans and your ideas.

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone _____ Date of Membership _____

I am most interested in these areas:

- North Meadows
- Riverside Park
- Downtown
- East Hartford
- Colt Park
- South Meadows
- Windsor
- Wethersfield
- Other _____

I'd be interested in:

- Helping to buy a bench
- Helping to plant a tree
- Helping to organize a fair
- Getting my councilman and state representative to help
- Making sure my friends help too
- I don't want to become a member now, but please keep me informed of what you are doing.
- I am so fond of the river I would like to become a patron. Please let me know more about this program.

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Special acknowledgement is given to the National League of Cities publication, *Designing Your Waterfronts*, by Ann Breen and Dick Rigby, for information on comparable waterfront development contained in Volume 1 of this report.

Special thanks to the HARTFORD COURANT for their permission to reprint materials in Volumes 1 & 2, and also to the contributors of riverfront recollections.



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RIVERFRONT RECAPTURE PLAN

This publication is part of a participatory planning process. It was commissioned by Riverfront Recapture, Inc. (RRI), a not-for-profit organization supported by private, voluntary and public-sector groups from the Greater Hartford area.

RRI evolved out of a recent history of citizen concern about access to one of the region's principal natural resources—the Connecticut River. It is committed to broad and continuing public involvement in recapturing the riverfront.

